

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOI/PA
DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET
FOI/PA# 1328744-0

Total Deleted Page(s) = 21

Page 10 ~ b6; b7C; b7D;
Page 24 ~ Referral/Direct - 159-4005 letter dated March 6 1975;
Page 25 ~ Referral/Direct - 159-4005 letter dated March 6 1975 pg2/ GSA;
Page 33 ~ Referral/Direct - 159-4005 letter dated Feb 21 1975/ NRC;
Page 34 ~ Referral/Direct - 159-4005 letter dated Feb 20 1975 pg2/ NRC;
Page 152 ~ b6; b7C; b7D;
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Page 212 ~ b6; b7C;
Page 213 ~ b6; b7C;
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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOI/PA
DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET
FOI/PA# 1253881-0

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

Asst. Dir.:	
Adm. Serv.	
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Ident.	
Inspection	
Intell.	
Laboratory	
Plan. & Eval.	
Spec. Inv.	
Training	
Legal Coun.	
Telephone Rm.	
Director Sec'y	

NR 011 OC PLAIN

954 PM NITEL FEB 27, 1975 DAF

TO DIRECTOR 159-4005

FROM OKLAHOMA CITY 159-45 P

UNSUBS; KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED) AKA, LMRDA; 00J; 00:
OKLAHOMA CITY.

FOR INFORMATION OF BUREAU, THE OKLAHOMA CITY TIMES, A DAILY
NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED AT OKLAHOMA CITY, IN THE FEB 26, 1975,
EDITION, PAGE 13, HAD AN ARTICLE INDICATING THAT THE REASONER
REPORT HAD PREPARED A DOCUMENTARY ENTITLED "HOW DID KAREN SILKWOOD
DIE?" AS A SEGMENT TO THE WEEKLY ABC PROGRAM, MARCH 1, 1975,
AT 5:30 PM EDT. THE ARTICLE QUOTED A PRESS RELEASE ISSUED
BY ABC NEWS WHICH INDICATES THAT ABC HAD UNCOVERED SEVERAL
PREVIOUSLY UNDISCOVERED FLAWS IN THE OKLAHOMA HIGHWAY PATROL
INVESTIGATION OF SILKWOOD'S FATAL WRECK.

THE ARTICLE INDICATED THAT THE OKLAHOMA CITY ABC AFFILIATE,
KOCO TV, CHANNEL 5, WILL NOT AIR THE PROGRAM. THE STATION DOES
NOT REGULARLY BROADCAST THE REASONER REPORT.

OKLAHOMA CITY WILL CONTINUE TO FURNISH BUREAU PERTINENT

INFORMATION REGARDING CAPTIONED CASE.

END Deleted Copy Sent [REDACTED]
by Letter Dated 3-16-76
Per FOIPA Request [REDACTED]

b6
b7C

16 MAR 4 1975

ACK-FIVE-PLS

58 MAR 10 1975

February 8, 1975
GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

This involves an investigation which has received nationwide publicity into the death of Karen G. Silkwood, former employee at Kerr McGee Corporation, manufacturers of plutonium at Crescent, Oklahoma, and active member of Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW). Silkwood was killed in a one-car accident 11/13/74. It has been alleged by OCAW that Silkwood's automobile was hit from behind by another vehicle, causing her to run off the road, resulting in her death. Oklahoma Highway Patrol investigated accident and found no indication of foul play. Investigation by FBI has developed no information indicating her death was other than accidental.

Attached advises of an article appearing in an Oklahoma City daily newspaper, 2/26/75, indicating the "Reasoner Report" has prepared a documentary entitled, "How Did Karen Silkwood Die?", as a segment to the weekly ABC program, 3/1/75, at 5:30 p.m., EDT. Article quoted press release issued by ABC News which indicates ABC has uncovered several previously undiscovered flaws in Oklahoma Highway Patrol investigation into accident.

Oklahoma City following this matter closely.

ELR:cjl

1 - Mr. Moore

can
rel
2/28/75
RFB
net
21
ms

Airtel

1 - Mr. R. E. Gebhardt
(Attn: [redacted])
1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

b6
b7C

To: SAC, Oklahoma City (Enclosure)

2/27/75

From: Director, FBI

UNSUBS; UNAUTHORIZED POSSESSION OF
PLUTONIUM RESULTING IN THE CONTAMINATION
OF KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED), [redacted]
AND [redacted] KERR-MC GEE CORPORATION
(KMC), NUCLEAR PRODUCTS DIVISION, CIMARRON
FACILITY, CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA
AEA

b6
b7C

Enclosed herewith is a copy of self-explanatory
letter from the Acting Assistant Attorney General dated 2/21/75.

According to the Department, if it can be established
that one or more persons involved in the contamination of
captioned individuals during November, 1974, had unauthorized
possession of plutonium, a Special Nuclear Material, a
violation of Section 2077, Title 42, U. S. Code could have
occurred. In this regard, the Department requests that the
Bureau conduct an investigation to determine whether such a
violation has occurred.

Oklahoma City should immediately institute an Atomic
Energy Act (AEA) investigation in line with Departmental
instructions and closely coordinate any inquiries with your
investigation captioned "Unsub; Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased);
LMRDA; OOJ;" Oklahoma City file 159-45, Bureau file 159-4005.

Surep promptly.

1 - Oklahoma City (159-45)

① - 159-4005 (Unsub; Karen G. Silkwood, et al)

ADD- [redacted]

(7)

NOTE:

Since 11/74, Oklahoma City has had ongoing investigation
concerning labor difficulties experienced at KMC. This investi-
gation along with results of Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
investigation furnished to Department. Review of information by
Department indicates possible violation of Section 2077, Title
42, U. S. Code (AEA) exists and Department requests Bureau
conduct AEA investigation. Oklahoma City being so advised.

DUPLICATE YELLOW

159-4005-
NOT RECORDED
45 MAR 2 1975

ORIGINAL FILED IN 117

1 - Mr. R. E. Gebhardt
(Attn:)

Airtel 1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

b6
b7c

To: SAC, Oklahoma City (117-49) (Enclosure)

2/26/75

From: Director, FBI

UNSUB; SCATTERING OF URANIUM FUEL
PELLETS, KERR MC GEE CORPORATION,
CIMARRON FACILITY, CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA,
12/26/74
AEA

ReOCairtel with letterhead memorandum (LHM) enclosure
dated 1/28/75.

Enclosed herewith is a copy of Departmental letter
dated 2/14/75.

It is pointed out in enclosed Departmental letter that
if it can be established that the person or persons who
scattered captioned fuel pellets had unauthorized possession
of the pellets at that time, a violation of Title 42, U. S. Code,
Section 2077, could have occurred.

The Department requests that the FBI continue
investigation in this matter and endeavor to identify the
individual or individuals responsible. Accordingly, you should
immediately institute investigation at captioned facility in an
effort to identify unsub. In this regard, you should closely
coordinate this investigation with investigation currently
underway at Cimarron Facility entitled "Unsub; Karen G. Silkwood
(Deceased); LMRDA; OOJ;" your file 159-45, as it may be directly
connected with the labor difficulties Kerr-McGee has recently
experienced.

Surep.

1 - Chicago (For information)
① - 159- (Unsub; Karen G. Silkwood, et al)
AJD:mjg (7)
NOTE:

By airtels 12/29/74, and 1/28/75, with LHM enclosures,
Oklahoma City furnished details concerning captioned matter. LHMs
referred to the Department for decision as to FBI investigation
under the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. By letter
of 2/14/75, Department requested continuance of investigation and
Oklahoma City being so advised.

6 MAR 05 1975

159-
DUPLICATE

NOT RECORDED
45 FEB 27 1975

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

REPORTING OFFICE WASHINGTON FIELD	OFFICE OF ORIGIN OKLAHOMA CITY	DATE 3/6/75	INVESTIGATIVE PERIOD 2/28/75
TITLE OF CASE UNSUBS; Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased)		REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED]	TYPED BY lej
		CHARACTER OF CASE LMRDA;OOJ	

REFERENCE: Report of SA [REDACTED] dated 2/28/75,
at Washington, D. C.

- RUC -

ADMINISTRATIVE:

[REDACTED] was advised that inasmuch as the fender and bumper from SILKWOOD's automobile has been examined by four examiners hired by the OCAW, it was highly unlikely the FBI Laboratory would at this time be interested in conducting an examination of the bumper and fender as there was no guarantee they had not been contaminated or altered in some fashion and they could not be considered as evidence, as of the time of the accident, at this time. [REDACTED] stated he realized this, but felt that such an examination might provide the FBI with a clue.

b6
b7C

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CLAIMED				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NONE	ACQUIT- TALS	CASE HAS BEEN:
CONVIC.	FUG.	FINES	SAVINGS	RECOVERIES		
						PENDING OVER ONE YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
						PENDING PROSECUTION OVER SIX MONTHS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
APPROVED	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE				DO NOT WRITE IN SPACES BELOW	
COPIES MADE					1	REC-43
6- Bureau (159-4005) 3- Oklahoma City (159-45) (1- USA, Oklahoma City) 1- WFO (159-369) Deleted Copy Sent by Letter Dated 5-10-77 Per FOIPA Request						MAR 10 1975
Dissemination Record of Attached Report						Notations
Agency	1cc ROM CRIM. DIV					
Request Recd.	1- [REDACTED]					
Date Fwd.	3/12/75					
How Fwd.	06 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] To [REDACTED]					
By	[REDACTED]					

b6
b7C

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to: 1- USA, Oklahoma City

Report of:

b6

b7C

Office: Washington, D. C.

Date:

3/6/75

Field Office File #:

159-369

Bureau File #: 159-4005

Title:

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased)

Character:

LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE ACT OF
1959; OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

Synopsis:

Report of regarding his examination of a
section of the fender from SILKWOOD's automobile obtained
and set forth.

b6

b7C

- RUC -

DETAILS: WASHINGTON, D. C.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 3/6/751

[redacted] Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW), 1126 16th Street, N.W., made available a copy of the report of E. L. MARTIN, Martin and Carlisle Chemical Laboratory, Incorporated, concerning an examination of a section of an automobile fender from SILKWOOD's automobile. MARTIN's report is set forth below.

b6
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[redacted] stated that the fender and bumper from SILKWOOD's automobile were still in the custody of [redacted] Accident Reconstruction Laboratory, Dallas, Texas, and would be made available to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for examination if requested.

b6
b7c

Interviewed on 2/25/75 at Washington, D. C. File # WFO 159-369

by SA [redacted] b6
b7C Date dictated 2/28/75

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

REPORTING OFFICE WASHINGTON FIELD	OFFICE OF ORIGIN OKLAHOMA CITY	DATE 2/28/75	INVESTIGATIVE PERIOD 2/11 - 18/75
TITLE OF CASE UNSUBS; KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED)		REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED]	b6 b7C TYPED vif
		CHARACTER OF CASE LMRDA; OOF	

REFERENCE: Report of SA [REDACTED] dated 2/5/75,
at Washington, D.C.

- P -

b6
b7CADMINISTRATIVE DATA

An attempt was made to contact [REDACTED] on
2/11/75, but she was in Oklahoma.

LEADSWASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE

b6
b7C AT WASHINGTON, D.C. Will continue to maintain contact
with [REDACTED] OCAW, to obtain a copy of the report of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] pertaining to the rubber smudge on SILKWOOD's car.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CLAIMED					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NONE	ACQUIT- TALS	CASE HAS BEEN: PENDING OVER ONE YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO PENDING PROSECUTION OVER SIX MONTHS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
CONVIC.	FUG.	FINES	SAVINGS	RECOVERIES			

APPROVED <i>NFS H+</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN SPACES BELOW	
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Dissemination Record of Attached Report		Notations	
Agency	Lee ROM CRIM. DIV 1-126/100	<div style="text-align: center;">5 10 11</div> <div style="text-align: right;">IN PROCESSING</div>	
Request Recd.	1-1000		
Date Fwd.	3/3/75		
How Fwd.	OGD		
By	EXP/ [REDACTED]		

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to: 1- USA, Oklahoma City

Report of: [REDACTED]

b6

b7C

Office: Washington Field

Date: 2/28/75

Field Office File #: 159-369

Bureau File #: 159-4005

Title: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED)Character: LABOR - MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE
ACT OF 1959; OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

Synopsis:

[REDACTED] National Public Radio, received a telephone call at her home on 1/25/75, in which the caller stated, "If you continue covering the KERR MC GEE piece you will be in trouble". [REDACTED] does not know if it was a local or long distance call, but is inclined to think the call was made by someone in her office.

b6

b7C

- P -

DETAILS:Deleted Copy Sent [REDACTED]
by Letter 10-6-75
Per FOIA Request

b6

b7C

23

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 2/25/75

1

[redacted], National Public Radio, 2025 M Street, N.W., was interviewed at her office and she furnished the following information:

On Saturday, January 25, 1975, she received a telephone call at her home, [redacted] telephone number [redacted]. When she answered the phone call the caller, a man, stated, "If you continue covering the KERR MC GEE piece you will be in trouble." She immediately asked for the identity of the caller whereupon he hung up. The entire conversation did not last over 20 seconds.

b6
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[redacted] had been in Oklahoma a week or two prior to the call gathering information on the KAREN SILKWOOD accident. In Oklahoma she had talked to several KERR MC GEE employees, members of the union at the company, and to reporters for the "Daily Oklahoman".

She did not recognize the voice and has no idea whether the call was a local or long distance call. She does not place any significance on the fact the call was made to her home because she has instructed her office to furnish her home phone number to individuals who call her office.

[redacted] is inclined to think the call was made by someone from her office although everyone she has asked if they made the call has denied making it. The reason she believes it may have been a co-worker is because several of them have made remarks, such as "watch out or you will be in an accident", or "you will be killed", since she has been working on the SILKWOOD story.

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[redacted] was again in Oklahoma from February 9 through February 13, 1975. While in Oklahoma she was not threatened in any manner but she has noticed antagonism displayed on the part of KERR MC GEE employees toward her as they feel the news media is trying to close the plant with resulting job losses to them.

She does not feel that the KERR MC GEE Corporation would be involved in any threat against her although officials

Interviewed on 2/18/75 at Washington, D.C. File # WFO 159-369

by SA [redacted] b6
b7C Date dictated 2/19/75

Deleted Copy Sent
by Letter
Per FOIA Request

of the company have not been cooperative with her and on her recent trip to Oklahoma she feels she was under surveillance because several individuals she interviewed told her that company investigators contacted them shortly after her interviews.

[] attempted to solicit information concerning the Federal Bureau of Investigation's investigation but the interviewing agent was noncommittal. She was then asked what her own inquiry had developed. [] replied that she had been surprised to learn from interviews with SILKWOOD's friends []

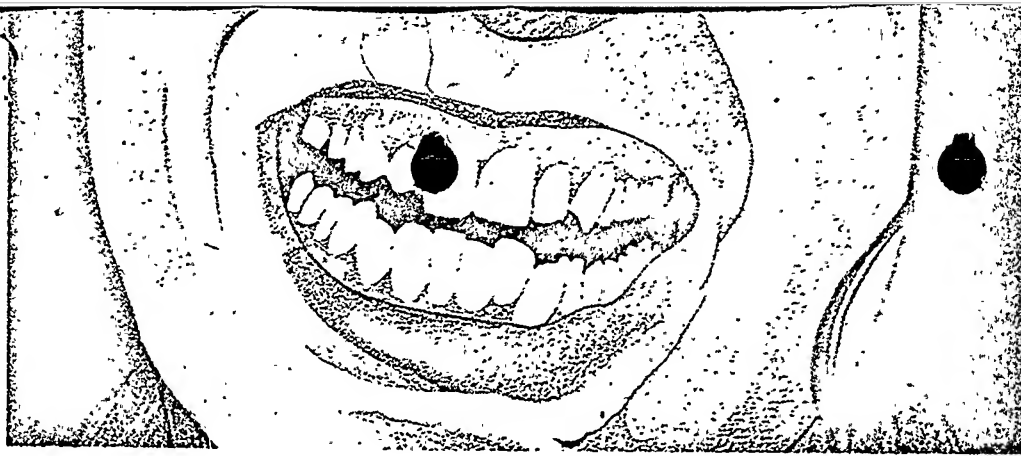
b6
b7C

[] that she was a very mixed up individual, no saint and had signed away her three children with no visiting rights. [] also said that she had learned that SILKWOOD had told many KERR MC GEE employees that she was gathering information to be used against the company. [] stated that the attitude of many KERR MC GEE employees was that SILKWOOD was a "bitch" who was going to cost them their jobs.

[] stated that according to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol the dents on the left rear fender of SILKWOOD's car were caused at the time the car was removed from the culvert. She stated she had interviewed the operator of the wrecker who removed the car from the culvert and he denied he could have caused the dents.

b6
b7C

[] stated that she had been told by another reporter, name undisclosed, that two current employees and a former employee of KERR MC GEE had been involved in smuggling plutonium out of the KERR MC GEE facility. She stated that various employees she had interviewed had stated it would be easy to smuggle plutonium out of the plant.



NEW TIMES, February 21, 1975, Volume 4, Number 4
TOP OF THE NEWS

The new hustlers *Votes have always been sold—for influence and patronage. But black politicians have added a new twist: they sell their endorsements and backing for cash, and to the highest bidder*

By Robert Sam Anson

18

The nuclear martyr *(and the strange case of the purloined plutonium papers) The publicity surrounding the death of Karen Silkwood seems destined to elevate the young plutonium worker to virtual sainthood—and to sink the nuclear industry still further into disrepute*

By Roger Rapoport

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Nixon: For the record

By Paul Slansky

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THESE ARE NEW TIMES

The Straightening of America *The greening of campuses continues—but it has more to do with wallets and pocketbooks than consciousness*

By Steve Berman

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LOCAL COLOR

Side Trips *Innocent abroad:*

By Rafael Steinberg

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Marina del Oz *It's a huge playpen filled with tenants who can call it a "lifestyle" without cracking a smile. Is it a blast or a total turnoff?*

By Annette Duffy

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THE ARTS

The wising up of Tiny Tim *In which a middle-aged innocent finally learns about hypocrisy and greed*

By Harry Stein

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THE INSIDER page 12

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE COOPER

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Books: *Here at the New Yorker*
page 65

Final Tribute

The quiet death of a rewarding
game show

By Jordon Enid

page 68

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LETTERS

Beware the hazards

I am amazed that Amanda Spake was able to complete and file her report about "South Carolina's Silent Death Factory" in the January 24 issue. Drive carefully, Amanda.

I am sure that with the high unemployment of the work force today, this is the psychologically right time to push construction on hazardous and possibly disastrous facilities like the Barnwell Nuclear Fuel Plant. Politicians of the Solomon Blatt and Edgar Brown type know that people welcome money—even if it's dirty. What is most frightening is that it will take a million or more people dying, billions of dollars damage and untold genetic damage to children yet to be born before such madness will be stopped.

Until that occurs, all I'm able to say is, "Thank God I live in Montana!"

Chuck Peters
Superior, Montana

Acquitted

Lizzie Borden took an axe
And gave her parents forty whacks.
For Ms. Kole's wrist, a tiny tap:
Lizzie Borden beat the rap.
("Women Who Murder," January 24)

Dorothy G. Weatherby
Columbia, Maryland

Editor's Note: Thanks for making the point for us. A full confession was in the works.

With great interest I read your January 24 article pertaining to the preferential treatment women may receive in a court of law.

Something similar was mentioned in the 1813 copy of the *Constable's Guide*. A section of Chapter 5 deals with those "privileged from arrest." Married women were immune to the law, as were congressmen's servants and servicemen's companions. Any arrests made on Sunday were null and void. Of course, this was in New York State, prior to the pressure of urban sprawl.

Mark Goldfarb
Memphis, Tennessee

Our etherized state

Re: James S. Kunen's January 24
Slow Down ("What will '75 be like?") about the etherized state of the world at present. He pats himself on the back for not even

giving "a damn who won the Super Bowl." A mean feat. I don't know when it was played, where it was played or who played in it. And I don't give a damn either!

Charles Martin
New London, Connecticut

An enlightening morning

This began as any other uneventful Wednesday. I arose, dressed and drove to the bus stop. Somehow, the "Limited" had left without me and I was forced to take the "Express," which, unfortunately, gets me to work too soon and is usually filled with the kinds of people who upset me at 7 a.m. My worst fears were realized. I found myself surrounded by business types reading 1974 federal income tax forms, business publications and, for variety, *Reader's Digest*.

Having resigned myself to a day of anger and depression, I rebelliously pulled out my January 10 edition of *New Times* and read Janet Maslin's article on Randy Newman. Many smiles and stifled chuckles later, I felt much better. I may even begin writing music again. And its only 7:30 a.m.!

Thank you *New Times*. Thank you Ms. Maslin. God love you, Randy Newman.

Sam R. Culotta
Glendora, California

Zeroing in

It's a damn shame for all the creative, talented, struggling females everywhere, particularly in the motion picture industry, that the only bankable female star is the Lucille Ball of the '70s, Barbra Streisand ("Collision on Rainbow Road," January 24). She has zero social consciousness, zero creativity, zero acting talent. Now with the onset of Jon the Ego leading her around by the tail, she appears to have zero intelligence.

Jan Drexler
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Who gives a damn about Barbra Streisand and her hairdresser?

B. Menninger
Franconia, New Hampshire

Right on!

Florence King's Final Tribute just has to be the best thing you've published to date. Thanks.

F. Hap Kimma
Holmes, New York

24

The nuclear martyr

(and the strange case of the purloined plutonium papers)

By Roger Rapoport

When cars spin off the road in Logan County, Oklahoma, people usually think of George Martin's wrecker service first. Be it a tourist who has flipped on Interstate 35 or a farmer who has gone into a ditch along Highway 77, it's Martin who can be counted on to tow them out long after the competition has turned in for the night. So it was no accident when Guthrie police dispatched Martin to the scene of a possible fatal accident on Highway 74, a mile south of the Kerr-McGee Cimarron nuclear plant, about 7:30 on the night of October 13, 1974. George fell in behind the Guthrie Fire Department ambulance as other cars pulled onto the shoulder, opening a path for the emergency vehicles roaring past.

But about five and a half miles out of town a strange thing happened to Martin, something that had never occurred during any of the 1,200 accident calls he has handled over the past four years. Guthrie police radioed him to turn around and head home. Another wrecker would be taking the call. "I was closer to the accident than anyone else," says Martin. "It just didn't make any sense to turn me around when there was a report that someone was pinned in a car, particularly when I was running right with the ambulance. You just don't pull someone off a Code Two alert like that. I still can't figure out what was going on that night."

The victim was Karen Silkwood, a 28-year-old laboratory technician and union leader at Kerr-McGee's plutonium plant. Investigators hired by her union, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), have since found dents indicating that her Honda Civic auto was forced off the road. Kerr-McGee and Oklahoma authorities insist that Silkwood, who was contesting the company's iron rule on several fronts last fall, drove to her own death. But many people with firsthand

knowledge of the wreck scene and other events surrounding the plutonium worker's last days are dubious about these and other official contentions.

What makes them suspicious—besides the unexplained dents in the rear of her car—is the fact that Karen Silkwood, at the time of her death, was on her way to meet New York *Times* reporter David Burnham, bearing documents that not only could have shut down the Kerr-McGee facility but could also have precip-

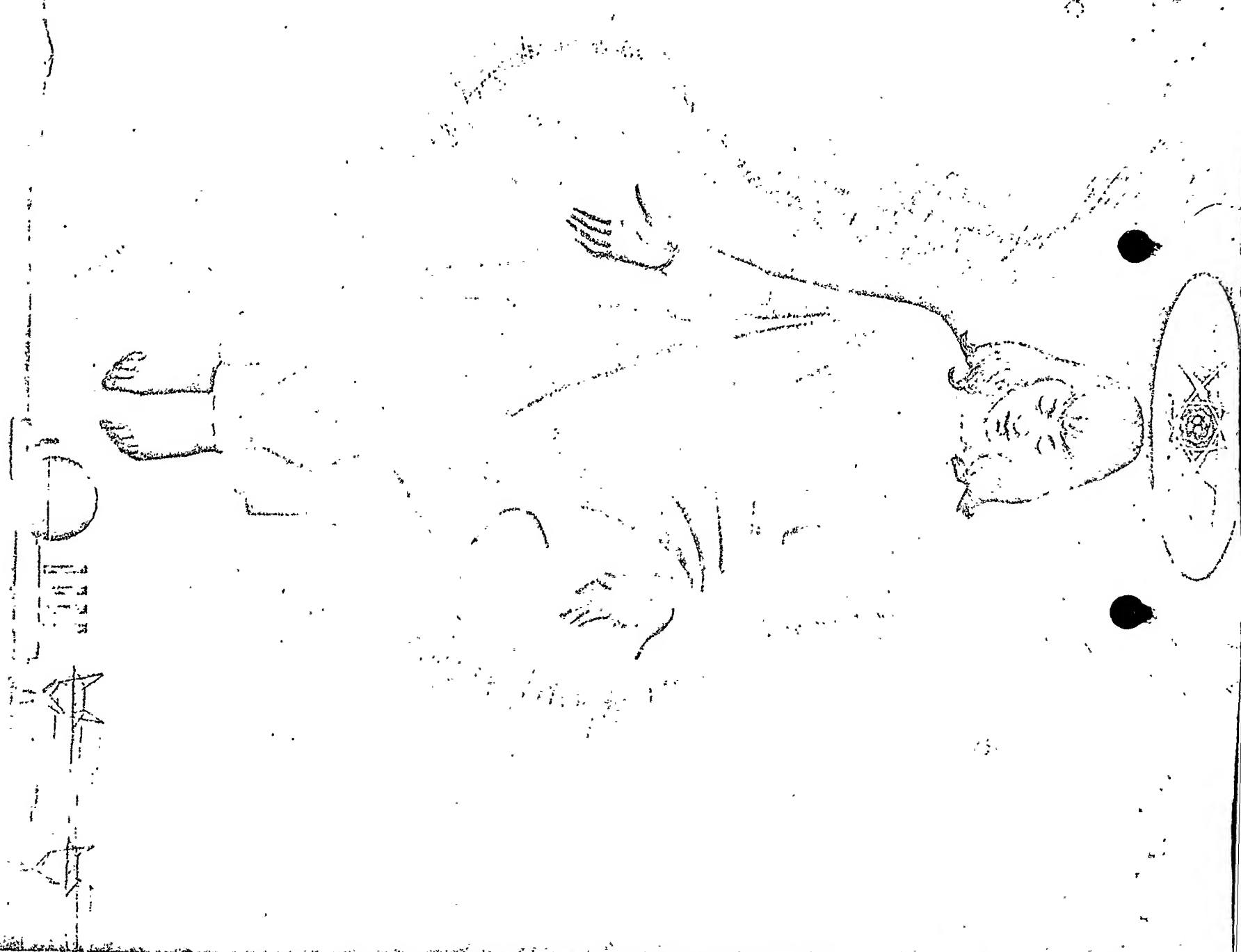
The publicity surrounding the death of Karen Silkwood seems destined to elevate the young plutonium worker to virtual sainthood—and to sink the nuclear industry still further into disrepute.

itated investigations of nuclear plants across the country. As it turned out, the rendezvous was never kept and the documents all disappeared. The country was spared—for the time being—its first full-dress nuclear scandal, but was left instead with smouldering circumstantial evidence of a cover-up, a cover-up that has at the very least created the anti-nuclear forces' first martyr. The civil rights movement had its Goodmans, Schwerners and Chan-eyes, the anti-war protesters had their Kent State victims and now the environmental-

ists have their Karen Silkwood.

Though circumstantial, the evidence of foul play is almost overwhelming: wreckers turned back halfway, accident times fudged, incriminating documents disposed of, post-mortem materials tampered with. At least a week before her fatal accident, it seemed clear that someone was out to get the outspoken plutonium worker. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the new agency that has taken over regulatory functions of the Atomic Energy Commission) data indicates that sometime in early November Karen Silkwood's apartment in Edmond, a suburb of Oklahoma City, was entered by an individual who contaminated her kitchen, bedroom and bathroom with plutonium, the most carcinogenic substance known. Just one-millionth of a gram is sufficient to cause cancer in experimental animals, a fact that was apparently understood by the intruder who spread plutonium on her bologna, cheese, chicken, bed sheets, bathmat, makeup and toilet seat. This effort to poison Karen Silkwood involved roughly 300 micrograms of plutonium, which is sufficient to cause 300 human lung cancers if evenly distributed. The question of how someone managed to smuggle this plutonium out of the Kerr-McGee plant raises two frightening possibilities: that either security precautions designed to prevent the theft of plutonium—which is, after all, the stuff of nuclear bombs—are incredibly lax, or the radioactive material was taken from the plant, to be deposited in Silkwood's apartment, with the compliance of Kerr-McGee higher-ups. Judging from its performance to date, both are conceivable.

With its mines, mills and processing facilities spread across the West, Kerr-McGee, a major integrated fuels company, controls about 20 percent of America's uranium market. Determined to retain its leadership in the nuclear fuel industry, the company opened its Cimar-



on plutonium unit 1969 alongside another plant already making uranium fuel for light water reactors operating around the country. The facility, located 35 miles north of Oklahoma City near Crescent (pop. 1500), was Kerr-McGee's early entry into the fuel market for a second generation of plutonium "breeder" reactors that produce more fuel than they consume. Work at the new facility began with a contract to produce fuel for the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) breeder test reactor at the Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois.

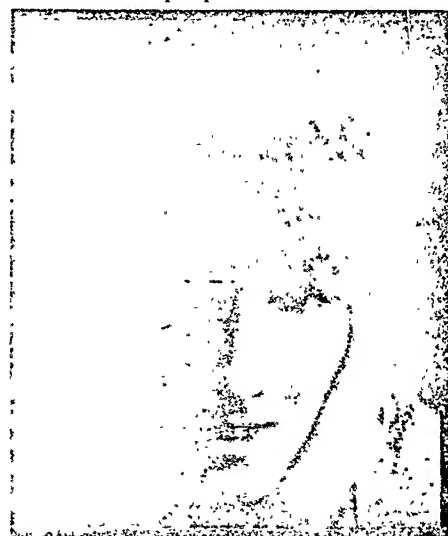
But from the start, Kerr-McGee management discovered that running a plutonium facility brings with it some very special problems. To begin with, the company ran into complex licensing restrictions because of its unfortunate decision to locate its new plant in the midst of a tornado alley. Since 1959, there have been 260 tornadoes in counties within a 50-mile radius of the plant, including eight in Logan County itself. A statistical analysis shows there is a one-in-ten chance of the plant being flattened by a tornado during a 65-year time span. The situation is so serious that operations must be restricted on days of severe weather forecasts to minimize plutonium dispersal in the event the plant is knocked down.

When actual tornado alerts are forecast, employees must hustle as much plutonium as possible into a weatherproof vault. Even if everything goes perfectly under the optimum four-hour warning system, there would still be enough plutonium particles left in the facility—if dispersed by a tornado—to force the evacuation and possible condemnation of roughly 100 square miles of central Oklahoma because plutonium has a half-life of 24,000 years.

Generally, the young production employees hired to start up the new facility failed to appreciate these and other plutonium risks. "During our on-the-job training, we were told a fraction of a microgram of plutonium was toxic to the human body," says Drew Stephens, who went to work as a lab analyst in 1969. "But no one said anything about cancer." Workers like Stephens saw themselves leading the way to what AEC Chairman Glenn T. Seaborg described as a "plutonium economy," in which this synthetic element would fuel half of America's energy needs, and breeders would generate 80,000 kilograms of plutonium annually. Confident of their industry's future, an easy camaraderie developed among the plutonium people, who looked forward to

moving up with Kerr-McGee. At lunch time, they joined in parking lot Frisbee games, and during coffee breaks; groups would slip out behind an adjacent uranium building to share a joint.

Their belief in the future of Seaborg's plutonium economy was renewed in 1971, when President Nixon announced a \$3-billion breeder program that would "move this nation into an era of plentiful, clean and safe atomic power." Some of the Kerr-McGee personnel were aware that environmental groups disagreed with Nixon's program. It was, after all, a fact that the nation's only existing commercial breeder, the Enrico Fermi reactor at Monroe, Michigan, had cost \$120 million, produced only \$303,000 worth of electricity and failed to generate any fuel. In 1966 the reactor core melted down and nearly blew up in an accident that University of Michigan scientists later estimated would have killed 133,000 people.



Karen Silkwood: 1946-1974

But this kind of nit-picking made little impact at Kerr-McGee, as the company bid successfully to supply 18,500 plutonium fuel pins for the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF), the latest experimental unit in the AEC's breeder program. By August 1972, when Karen Silkwood was hired to work in the plutonium plant's metallography lab, work on the Hanford, Washington, FFTF contract was getting under way. Supervisors were impressed with the way this energetic new employee took to her analytical work. Karen had come to Kerr-McGee from Duncan, Oklahoma, after divorcing her husband, Bill Meadows, a Mobil Oil pipeline supervisor, whom she had married at the age of 19 after one semester of college in Texas. Because Meadows had a better income and was remarrying, Silkwood reluctantly chose to give him custody of their three children, a decision that still troubled her as she began a new life at \$3.25 an hour

with Kerr-McGee.

Almost from the start, Karen began to have misgivings about her employers and colleagues. "Although she did a very good job," says one of her former supervisors, "Karen was upset when people took shortcuts that compromised the quality of our product." At the end of 1972, the union local went out on a ten-week strike, during which Karen's insight into Kerr-McGee was sharpened by Drew Stephens, by now a union militant. "Even then, as we walked the picket line, we didn't understand what we were up against," says Stephens. "One of the union leaders told us that plutonium caused cancer. I just laughed at him."

Because the company was successfully running scabs through the picket line, union members finally ratified a substandard contract that gave Kerr-McGee the right to regulate everything down to the OCAW bulletin board. When Karen returned to work, conditions seemed to have deteriorated inside the plant. Her worst fears were confirmed on March 5, 1973, when a bag filled with plutonium-contaminated waste caught fire, exposing seven workers to 400 times the weekly permissible limit for insoluble airborne plutonium. Decontamination of the two affected rooms took two weeks. In a follow-up report the AEC criticized the company for delays in obtaining and analyzing urine and fecal samples from the contaminated individuals as well as for failing to notify the company medical consultant until the day after the accident. It also pointed out that evaluation of radioactivity in the affected areas had been hampered by the fact that the continuous room-air monitor chart had been allowed to run out the day before the fire.

Infuriated by the AEC's criticism, Kerr-McGee executive W.J. Shelley wrote back to bawl out the government agency: "We believe that the attitude that a commercial operation must be equipped to completely research the cause and effect of any such incident is beyond the requirements of the regulations and sound business judgment."

While executives like Shelley continued making their sound business judgments at Kerr-McGee headquarters in Oklahoma City, Karen Silkwood watched helplessly as nine more of her fellow employees were contaminated in three other accidents that year. She worried about the high turnover that was putting relatively inexperienced young workers in dangerous working situations. Low morale and boredom helped spur several young employees to engage in a morbid race to see who could get the "hottest" the fastest. Unaware that plutonium causes cancer,

Roger Rapoport's last piece for New Times was Bates Street Craziness.

the workers deliberately built up their exposure levels. By talking to her fellow employees, Karen learned there were also problems in the uranium plant. There, resident rednecks harassed a black employee into quitting by putting uranium powder on his stocking cap. And another employee brought a pellet gun to work so that he could shoot uranium dioxide fuel pellets at his colleagues whenever he got bored.

In addition, Kerr-McGee management was troubled by rumors that many of its employees were smoking grass and that some were into popping downers like methaqualone. The prospect of stoned workers being required to stash plutonium in the vault during a tornado alert was hardly reassuring to management. Equally troubling to the officials was talk of bisexual, homosexual and lesbian employees populating the work force. The fear was that they might be especially vulnerable to blackmail by nuclear saboteurs hunting for fresh plutonium.

Plant security also troubled the AEC, particularly after March 1974, when a routine inventory showed more than 1.8 kilograms of plutonium unaccounted for. Since this exceeded the agency's limit of error, the plant was shut down for a week while employees resurveyed for this missing nuclear material—an amount sufficient to provide 36 billion lung cancer doses if dispersed and inhaled. In April, after Kerr-McGee succeeded in reducing its quantity of missing plutonium below the 1.8 kilogram standard, the company asked the AEC for a licensing amendment that would increase their allowable limit of error. The AEC agreed to some minor changes and promised to reconsider a higher limit in 1975 if the company could demonstrate that it had "made reasonable efforts and cannot meet the limits of error" specified by its license.

By now Karen Silkwood was openly challenging company production pressures that she felt were directly responsible for the missing plutonium, the contamination of her fellow employees and the deficient quality control standards. She watched nervously as one of her colleagues took a felt-point pen and deliberately touched up defects in photo negatives of fuel-pin weld-test samples. Karen pointed out these quality control problems to supervisory personnel, but management took no action.

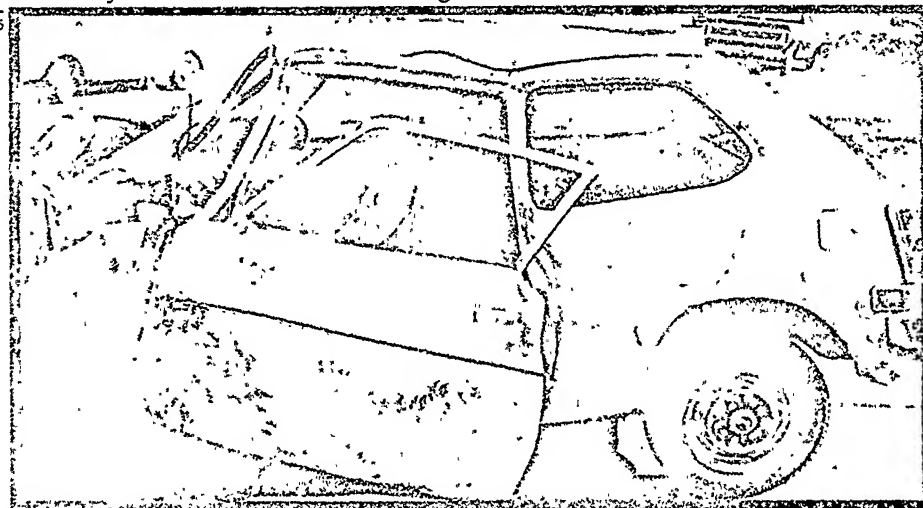
One of her former coworkers recalls, "They started hassling Karen over trivial matters, but she refused to stand for it. For example, when it was cold, Karen and some of the other employees took to wearing street clothes under their work clothes. One day supervision insisted that

they limit themselves to wearing only underwear beneath the coveralls. So Karen struck back the next day by showing up with nothing on beneath her work clothes. You could see everything right down to her nipples and pubic hair."

After Karen herself was accidentally exposed to airborne plutonium on July 31, she decided to take her case directly to the AEC. With the help of OCAW officials, Tony Mazzocchi and Steve Wodka, she was able to present a long list of alleged safety violations to agency officials at a Washington meeting in late September. The AEC promptly agreed to investigate Silkwood's charges, and Karen returned home to begin documenting her case for another meeting. Wodka was setting up with New York *Times* reporter David Burnham. Silkwood's determination to get the story out was redoubled on October 10, when two University of Minnesota scientists visiting

with rhesus monkeys and beagles who were also being monitored on the sophisticated radiation-counting equipment. When the three arrived home the following day, Karen was badly shaken. "She was convinced someone had poisoned her and that she was going to die," says Drew Stephens.

Shortly after seven the next night, Karen left a union session in Crescent and headed for an 8 p.m. Oklahoma City meeting with *Times* reporter, Burnham. According to an affidavit from one union member at the Crescent meeting, Silkwood walked out with a brown folder full of documents. These papers, which she had been taking from the plant, gave Karen the backup she needed to substantiate her allegations. At approximately 7:15 p.m., Karen's car went off the road and struck a cement culvert wingwall, killing her instantly. An OCAW accident analysis shows that the crash came after her



The death car. The license plate read "OKLAHOMA IS O.K."

the union corroborated rumors that plutonium was the most potent cancer-causing agent known. In between assembling documents for the New York *Times*, Karen, who was now a union committeewoman, worked overtime preparing for an upcoming round of contract talks with the company.

Plans for Silkwood's meeting with the New York *Times* were upset in early November after contamination was discovered in her apartment. Kerr-McGee decontamination crews, clad in space suits, began dumping Karen's belongings into 55-gallon drums that were carted off for disposal. Karen, her roommate Sherry Ellis (another Kerr-McGee employee) and boyfriend, Drew Stephens (who by now had quit the company), displayed enough plutonium exposure to qualify for an all-expense-paid trip to the AEC-funded Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. They arrived on November 11, and scientists promptly fit them into the schedule

Honda's rear bumper had been struck by a late-model car.

The wreck was discovered shortly before 7:30 p.m. by a trucker and two Kerr-McGee employees, Fred Sullivan and Law Godwin. While Godwin stayed with the wreck, Sullivan went to a nearby farmhouse where a call was made to the Guthrie police about 7:30 p.m. When the call came in, tow truck driver George Martin happened to be at the Guthrie police station; he was dispatched to the wreck immediately. Not until he was well on his way did the authorities turn Martin around and ask Ted Sebring, a Crescent Ford dealer, to tow the wreck instead.

When Sebring arrived at the accident scene, the Guthrie Fire Department ambulance crew was already prying Karen out of her Honda. According to Guthrie Police Patrolman William Clay, who reached the scene a little later: "There were papers scattered all around the wreck." For reasons still unclear, Sebring

the wreckage. His explanation for the delay seems thin indeed: "Her car was in a muddy creek," he says, "and I didn't want to get my hundred-dollar suit and fifty-dollar shoes dirty. So I asked the wrecker to radio my sales manager, Harold Smith, to come out so he could get in the creek and get her out." Smith says: "I arrived shortly after 8:00 p.m., about a half-hour after Ted. By that time they had gotten her out of the car and gone (to the hospital). We spent about 45 minutes digging out the car, towing it and locking it up in the garage."

After Karen was pronounced dead on arrival at a Guthrie hospital, authorities notified her parents in Nederland, Texas. Karen's father, Bill Silkwood, immediately phoned the Highway Patrol for details. "They kept asking me what was going on out there," says Mr. Silkwood. "They wanted to know what all the Kerr-McGee officials were doing out there around the wreck."

Late that night Drew Stephens and the OCAW's Steve Wodka (who had been in Oklahoma City with the *Times'* Burnham) learned of the crash, drove to Crescent and found the wrecked Honda out of reach in Sebring's garage. Peering through the locked door, all they could make out was the license plate on the rear of Karen's wrecked car, declaring "OKLAHOMA IS O.K." About 1 a.m. AEC officials got Ted Sebring out of bed, made him open his garage and found, after a careful survey, no radiation on the squashed vehicle.

The next morning, Stephens and Wodka picked up a boxful of Karen's belongings at Sebring's garage. Neither the brown folder nor any of the secret documents were inside.

The authorities, notified of the wreck by about 7:30 p.m., are claiming that they didn't learn about it until after 8:00—apparently to maintain a cover-up surrounding the disposal of Silkwood's documents. The fact that they turned around George Martin, the area's leading 24-hour wrecker, for a part-time wrecker driver who wasn't even willing to get his feet wet (thereby slowing down the towing process) makes sense only if someone didn't want Martin pulling out the wreck faster than the secret papers could be cleaned up.

Local police agencies, whose personnel include former Kerr-McGee employees, have done almost everything possible to shield the company from OCAW allegations of foul play. After the wreck, the spokesman for the local Highway Patrol, Kenneth Vanhoy, told the media that Karen might have crashed because she was tired from her recent "drive" to Los

sense until Vanhoy was reminded that Silkwood had flown to Los Alamos. The Highway Patrol also maintains that Martin's wrecker was turned around because Sebring was next up on a local wrecker rotation schedule. But Harold Smith, who helped Sebring tow the wreck, says: "We're not on the local wrecker rotation schedule. Sure we'll take occasional wrecks if it's in our neighborhood. But after 5:00 p.m. they are more apt to call Martin because we're home and he tows 24 hours." People in Logan County like George Martin and Harold Smith also suspect the official story that Silkwood's wreck lay undiscovered at the side of Highway 74 for roughly 45 minutes. Says Smith: "I know these roads pretty well, and I can't imagine someone going off Highway 74 at that point and remaining undiscovered for more than five minutes at the outside."

One employee had a pellet gun so he could shoot uranium dioxide fuel pellets when he got bored

Almost immediately after the accident, state, federal and union investigators moved in to conduct an exhaustive investigation of what was left of Karen Silkwood and her Honda. Following Karen's autopsy on November 14, the state medical examiner shipped her viscera to Los Alamos for further radiological counting and returned the rest of the young woman's remains to her parents in Texas. Answers to crucial questions about Silkwood's contamination were contained in urine and fecal samples she had left behind. But this data was getting fouled up. Two of Karen's most seriously contaminated urine samples were undated. And one high sample was part of a mid-November shipment that was accidentally turned upside down. When this leaky urine cargo was discovered at the San Francisco airport (en route to a testing laboratory in Hanford), AEC officials were required to come out and supervise repacking of the leaking containers.

Union charges that Karen had been driven off the road immediately put the plant into the national media. The company security office began administering lie detector tests to determine which employees were talking with reporters. Nine suspect employees, including the

to warehouse duty, where even a trip to the bathroom required a security escort. In January, six of these people were fired for smoking marijuana and such other offenses as disloyalty to Kerr-McGee. Also canned was Karen's former roommate, Sherry Ellis, who had been caught doodling on employee time cards.

By this time AEC data was in, showing that Karen had definitely ingested some plutonium and that someone had deliberately contaminated her urine samples to make them read abnormally high. Although the identity of the person who contaminated Karen Silkwood's bologna and the rest of her apartment remains unknown, it is not difficult to fathom a motive for the act; a number of Kerr-McGee employees as well as company officials took a dim view of Karen's determination to turn them in. It is far from implausible that the contamination of her apartment was the work of someone trying to scare her out of talking to the *New York Times*. As a matter of fact, her exposure to plutonium did succeed in frightening Karen, disrupting her life and messing up her original plans for a meeting with the *Times*. And, regardless of whether the fatal car crash was, in fact, a case of murder, it is clear that people at Kerr-McGee were sufficiently knowledgeable about her activities to be on the scene and cleaning up the vital documents within minutes of her death.

Some officials have floated the theory that Karen poisoned herself in order to strengthen her case against the company. But people who knew her disagree. The OCAW's Steve Wodka says: "After she found out she had been contaminated, she saved everything right down to her Kleenex for fear that disposing of it might inadvertently contaminate someone else. She was having her period at the time and even went so far as asking officials if she should save her tampons for appropriate radioactive disposal. No one in that plant was more afraid of plutonium than Karen Silkwood. She would have never contaminated herself. Never."

Although multiple federal investigations have begun into the case, there is no telling when the public will learn who contaminated her bologna, why police officials have obscured the time they responded to her wreck and who disposed of the secret documents she was carrying that night. But even if the truth of this case is never fully established, Karen Silkwood's place as the patron saint of the anti-nuclear movement seems assured. As one of her closest friends observed, "Karen could end up being to the nuclear industry what John Dean was to Watergate." ●

- 8*

24

F B I

Date: 3/11/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)

A I R T E L

(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)
 FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45)(P)
 RE: UNSUBS;
 KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
 LMRDA; OOJ
 OO: Oklahoma City

Enclosed herewith for the Bureau 6 copies of a LHM dated and captioned as above. Two copies LHM being furnished to USA, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Enclosed LHM sets forth self-explanatory article appearing in the 2/21/75 edition of New Times relative to the captioned case. LHM being submitted for completion of Bufiles.

2-Bureau (Enc. 6)
 2-Oklahoma City
 LJO/sal
 (4)

Deleted Copy Sent [redacted] b6
 by Letter Dated 5-10-76 b7C
 Per FOIPA Request Re K. Silkwood EX-110

REC-6

159-4005-24
MAR 13 1975

1-LEA 2cc ROM CRIM. DIV., by 0-6D
 1-NKC
 1-DRG/100 loc LABOR DEPT, TICKLER
 3/13/75
 1-4-75
 222/11

MAR 24 1975

Approved: _____
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____



*In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

March 11, 1975

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND
DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1959; OBSTRUCTION
OF JUSTICE

The Volume 4, Number 4 edition of the New Times,
February 21, 1975, on Pages 26-31, contained an article
entitled, "The Nuclear Martyr." The article is as follows:

This document contains neither
recommendations nor conclusions of
the FBI. It is the property of
the FBI and is loaned to your agency;
it and its contents are not to be
distributed outside your agency.

159-4005-24

- 1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
 1 - Mr. R. E. Gebhardt
 1 - (Attn:)
 1 - Legal Counsel
 (Route through for review)

b6
 b7c

March 18, 1975

- 1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall
 1 - Mr. F. S. Putman
 1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

Mr. Victor L. Lowe
 Director
 General Government Division
 United States General Accounting Office
 Washington, D. C. 20543

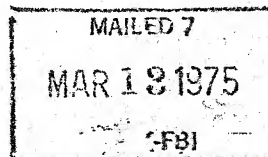
Dear Mr. Lowe:

Reference is made to your letter dated March 6, 1975, which advised that the Senate Committee on Government Operations had requested the General Accounting Office to inquire into certain aspects of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), and the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) investigations into the death of Karen G. Silkwood, an employee of the Kerr-McGee Nuclear Fuel Corporation, Crescent, Oklahoma, and her allegations relating to safety considerations and quality controls at Kerr-McGee.

This is to advise you the FBI presently has ongoing investigations involving certain allegations and occurrences involving Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, which have the potential for criminal prosecutions.

This Bureau has made it a practice in the past to refrain from discussing pending investigations and I intend to insure that this policy will continue in the future. Therefore, any request for information concerning these investigations should properly be addressed to Mr. John C. Keeney, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice.

Assoc. Dir. _____
 Dep. AD Adm. _____
 Dep. AD Inv. _____
 Asst. Dir.: _____
 Admin. _____
 Comp. Syst. _____
 Ext. Affairs _____
 Files & Com. _____
 Gen. Inv. _____
 Ident. _____
 Inspection _____
 Intell. _____
 Laboratory _____
 Plan. & Eval. _____
 Spec. Inv. _____
 Training _____
 Legal Coun. _____
 Telephone Rm. _____
 Director Sec'y _____



See NOTE Page Two.

51 APR 3 1975

MAIL ROOM ☐ TELETYPE UNIT ☐

ORIGINAL FILED IN 117-2701-5

Mr. Victor L. Lowe

For your information, I have taken the liberty of referring referenced letter along with a copy of this letter to the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General and the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division.

Sincerely yours,

G. M. Kelley

Clarence M. Kelley
Director

NOTE:

See memorandum F. S. Putman to Mr. W. R. Wannall, dated 3/10/75, captioned "Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, Atomic Energy Act," prepared by AJD:mjg.

Mr. W. R. Wannall

A. B. Fulton

1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
1 - Mr. D. W. Moore
1 - Mr. J. A. Mintz (Attn: [redacted])
3/3/75

2 - Mr. R. E. Gebhardt

(1 - [redacted])

1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall

1 - Mr. H. A. Boynton, Jr.

INQUIRY FROM GENERAL ACCOUNTING 1 - Mr. A. B. Fulton
OFFICE (GAO) CONCERNING CASE OF 1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin
UNSUB; KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED); 1 - Mr. R. P. Finzel
LMRDA; OOJ

b6
b7C

On or about 2/17/75, GAO [redacted] telephonically contacted Supervisor [redacted] INTD. [redacted] and [redacted] are in frequent contact with respect to GAO's current audit of FBI operations. [redacted] advised that GAO [redacted] was conducting an inquiry at the request of the Senate Government Operations Committee into the case of Karen Silkwood, a deceased employee of the Kerr-McGee Corporation, Crescent, Oklahoma, who allegedly died under mysterious circumstances in a possible labor-management dispute. [redacted] further advised that [redacted] was anxious to speak to appropriate FBIHQ case supervisors concerning this case and to determine the adequacy of cooperation between the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), and the FBI.

b6
b7C

After ascertaining from Supervisor [redacted] General Investigative Division, that the FBI had an ongoing investigation in this case and that the case itself was the subject of press and congressional interest, SA [redacted] advised [redacted] that any GAO inquiry or questions with respect to this case should be directed to [redacted] Attorney, Department of Justice, who was handling the case for the Department.

b6
b7C

On 2/27/75, GAO Auditor [redacted] telephonically contacted FBI Liaison Section, INTD, to advise that he had interviewed [redacted] of the Department of Justice regarding this matter and still desired to interview FBI supervisory personnel concerning the Silkwood case. [redacted] further stated he desired to contact the FBI Special Agents who actually conducted the field investigation to ascertain their comments concerning cooperation of ERDA and NRC personnel with the FBI during the course of the investigation. [redacted] also wishes to discuss with appropriate FBIHQ personnel what action the FBI plans in response to a 2/20/75 letter from NRC requesting an investigation into possible harassment of Kerr-McGee employees by the officials of that company.

b6
b7C

62-56866

1- 159-4005 Unsub; Karen Silkwood NOT RECORDED

51 MAR 24 1975

191 MAR 21 1975

CONTINUED - OVER

Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Wannall

Re: Inquiry From General Accounting Office (GAO) Concerning Case of Unsub;

Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased); LMRDA; OOJ

62-56866

On the afternoon of 2/27/75, Supervisor [] personally telephoned GAO Auditor [] and advised him that any request for interviews such as the above should be directed in writing to FBI Director Clarence Kelley over the signature of a senior official of the General Accounting Office, preferably the Comptroller General. [] was also advised that the FBI did not customarily grant interviews of FBIHQ supervisory personnel or field Agents in matters under pending investigation.

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RECOMMENDATION:

None. For information.

Director's Notation:

This is a very proper

ANSWER —

H

1 - Mr. R. E. Gebhardt

(Attn: [redacted])

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1 - Mr. D. W. Moore

1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall

March 4, 1975

Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division

Director, FBI

1 - Mr. F. S. Putman

1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

159-4005-
KERR-MC GEE NUCLEAR CORPORATION,
CINARRON FACILITY,
CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA
ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

Enclosed herewith is a copy of a letter dated February 20, 1975, from Mr. L. V. Gossick, Acting Executive Director for Operations, Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Washington, D. C., along with the enclosures thereto.

As noted in enclosed letter, the NRC advised that the allegations made by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) had been discussed with representatives of the Department of Justice. NRC advised that based upon these discussions, it was concluded that the Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation was in possible violation of Title 18, U. S. Code (USC), Sections 1505, 1510 and 18 CFR Section 19.16 (c). These possible violations should be investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under the criminal provisions of Title 42, USC, Section 2273 (Atomic Energy Act).

By way of background, it is noted that by letter dated November 20, 1974, from the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), Criminal Division, captioned "Death of Ms. Karen G. Silkwood," the Department requested that the Bureau conduct a preliminary investigation into the matters alleged in a "New York Times" newspaper article of November 19, 1974, and in the telegram of [redacted], Legislative Director of the OCAW. Department noted that these allegations, if substantiated, may constitute violations of Title 29, USC, Sections 530 and 411 and Title 18, USC, Section 1505.

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① 159-4005 (Unsub; Karen G. Silkwood, etc.)

1 - 117- (Unsubs; Unauthorized Possession of Plutonium, etc.)

1 - 117- (Unsub; Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, etc.)

AJD:mjg
(11)

SEE NOTE PAGE THREE

DUPLICATE YELLOW

57 MAR 19 1975

Assistant Attorney General
Federal Bureau of Investigation

This Bureau presently has an ongoing investigation in this regard captioned "Unknown Subjects; Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased); Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act; Obstruction of Justice" and reports in this investigation have been furnished to your Division.

Additionally, by letter captioned "Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr-McGee Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, Atomic Energy Act," dated February 14, 1975, the AAG, Criminal Division, noted that if it could be established that the person or persons who scattered uranium pellets around the plant grounds of this facility had unauthorized possession of these pellets, a violation of Title 42, USC, Section 2077 could have occurred. The Bureau was requested to continue an investigation with the view of identifying the individual or individuals responsible for this incident and this investigation is ongoing at this time.

In addition, by letter captioned "Plutonium Contamination of Kerr-McGee Employees, Karen G. Silkwood, now deceased, and [redacted] and [redacted] a Friend of Karen G. Silkwood, in November of 1974, Crescent, Oklahoma, Atomic Energy Act," dated February 21, 1975, the AAG, Criminal Division, advised that if it could be established that one or more persons involved in the contamination of these individuals had unauthorized possession of plutonium, a Special Nuclear Material, a violation of Title 42, USC, Section 2077 could have occurred. The Department requested that the Bureau conduct an investigation in this regard to determine whether such a violation is involved and this investigation is presently under way.

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The Department is requested to review the enclosed letter from NRC and its enclosures and advise if the investigations currently under way by this Bureau, as outlined above, are a sufficient response to recent occurrences at the Kerr-McGee Corporation or if additional investigations should be instituted under the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act or Title 18, USC, Sections 1505 and 1510.

Enclosures (9)

Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division

NOTE:

By letter dated 2/20/75, NRC requested FBI investigation concerning allegations made by OCAV under the criminal provisions of Title 42, USC, Section 2273. Bureau presently has three investigations under way concerning occurrences at Kerr-McGee facility and Department being requested to advise if present investigation sufficient or if additional investigation warranted.

3/7/75

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI ATTN: INTD
FROM: SAC, WFO (174-) (RUC)

THREAT TO BOMB PHILADELPHIA,
PENNSYLVANIA, 3/6/75
BT
(OO:PH)

Enclosed for the Bureau are four copies of letter with envelope. Enclosed for Philadelphia, Oklahoma City, and Las Vegas are three copies each of letter with envelope. Original letter and envelope are being sent to FBI Laboratory by separate communication for appropriate examination.

On 3/7/75, [redacted] [redacted]
[redacted] ex-FBI Agent and presently Security Officer, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. (WDC), provided WFO with original letter and its envelope allegedly from "the family Weather Underground."

ORIGINAL FILED IN

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KAREN G. SILKWOOD, now deceased, is subject of WFO 159-369, Oklahoma City file 159-45, and Bufile 159-4005.

LEADS

Philadelphia, Oklahoma City and Las Vegas conduct appropriate investigation.

- 4- Bureau (Enc. 4)
3- Las Vegas (Enc. 3)
3- Oklahoma City (Enc. 3)
2- Philadelphia (Enc. 3)

March 12, 1975

REC-35

159-41005-25

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted] Ohio 44128

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Dear [Redacted]:

Your letter of March 6th has been received. The FBI has conducted an intensive investigation regarding the death of Karen Silkwood and the results of our inquiries have been furnished to the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, U. S. Department of Justice, for a determination as to what further action may be warranted.

Sincerely yours,
C. M. Kelley
C. M. Kelley
Clarence M. Kelley
Director

MAILED 7
MAR 13 1975
FBI

- 1 - Cleveland - Enclosure
 - 1 - Oklahoma City - Enclosure
 - 1 - Mr. Gebhardt - Enclosure
- Attention [Redacted]

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NOTE: Response coordinated with Division 6 which advised that an investigation has been conducted concerning the death of Karen Silkwood, a representative of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union. Miss Silkwood, at the time of her death in an automobile accident, was scheduled to testify during an Atomic Energy Commission investigation. Investigation conducted to date has been sent to the Department of Justice for consideration. Correspondent is not identifiable in Bufiles.

WPH:nlm (6)

- Assoc. Dir. _____
- Dep. AD Adm. _____
- Dep. AD Inv. _____
- Asst. Dir.:
- Admin. _____
- Comp. Syst. _____
- Ext. Affairs _____
- Files & Com. _____
- Gen. Inv. _____
- Ident. _____
- Inspection _____
- Intell. _____
- Laboratory _____
- Plan. & Eval. _____
- Spec. Inv. _____
- Training _____
- Legal Coun. _____
- Telephone Rm. _____
- Director Sec'y _____

MAIL ROOM ☐ TELETYPE UNIT ☐

March 6, 1975

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W

Ohio 44128

Dear Mr. Director,

KAREN Silkwood

Is the FBI investigating the death of
KAREN Silkwood, who died November 13, 1974,
in Oklahoma?

Please reply at your earliest convenience.

Thank you - EX-10/59-4005-25

REC-35

MAR 14 1975

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
Washington, D.C.
% The Director

Sincerely
[Signature]
CORRESPONDENCE

b6
b7c

[Redacted]

4-15-75

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. W. R. Wannall *WRW/jml*

FROM : N. E. Putman

1 - Mr. J. E. Adams
1 - Mr. R. E. Gebhardt
(Attn: [redacted])
DATE: 3/28/75
1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall
1 - Mr. F. S. Putman
1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

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Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.: _____
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Files & Com. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Legal Coun. _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

SUBJECT: KERR-MC GEE NUCLEAR CORPORATION,
CIMARRON FACILITY, CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA
INFORMATION CONCERNING

SYNOPSIS:

This weekly memorandum sets forth results of investigation conducted concerning Bureau Specials currently under way at captioned facility.

ACTION:

None. For information.

117-4005
~~NOT RECORDED~~

641 ... 4 ...

DETAILS:

Concerning case entitled "Unsub; Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr-McGee Corporation (KMC), Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, 12/16/74, AEA," Bufile 117-2696, Oklahoma City file 117-49, investigative report submitted under date 3/19/75, which has been disseminated by FBIHQ to Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Department. Instant report sets forth investigation conducted to date, much of which has previously been incorporated in prior memoranda. [redacted] white male, date of birth [redacted] a former employee of KMC developed as logical suspect. One week prior to scattering incident, [redacted] remarked in presence of other employees regarding stirring up excitement at uranium plant. [redacted] admitted making a pellet gun two and one half to three years ago at facility, but denied using gun in scattering incident.

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AJD:mjg
(6)

CONTINUED - OV [redacted]

Deleted Copy Sent [redacted]
by Letter Dated 5-16-76 [redacted]
Per FOIPA Request [redacted]

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Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Wannall
Re: Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation,
Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma

Investigation outstanding, suspect interview with [REDACTED] being held in abeyance until additional detailed information developed regarding contamination incident which is the subject of separate current Bureau Special investigation, as [REDACTED] will be interviewed in this regard also.

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✓ With regards to case entitled "Unsubs; Unauthorized Possession of Plutonium Resulting in the Contamination of Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased), [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]; KMC, Nuclear Products Division, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, AEA," Bufile 117-2702, Oklahoma City file 117-51, initial report typed and presently in transit to FBIHQ.

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Investigation has determined that [REDACTED]

Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Wannali
Re: Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation,
Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma

Reports submitted by NRC concerning their investigation into this matter analyzed by Oklahoma City and additional data requested of NRC presently being awaited.

Following compilation of all available detailed and scientific information, Oklahoma City anticipates suspect interview with [redacted]

[redacted] and [redacted].

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6 In connection with case entitled "Unsubs; Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased), LMRDA; OOJ," Bufile 159-4005, Oklahoma City file 159-45 (a GID matter in which all investigation completed), conference being held by Oklahoma City with United States Attorney (USA), Western District of Oklahoma, 3/28/75, and copies of investigative reports in Atomic Energy Act (AEA) related cases furnished to USA due to his interest in this case. On 3/26/75, National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Tulsa, Oklahoma, advised Oklahoma City regarding two cases of possible violations of National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) concerning [redacted] and [redacted] both of whom were active in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Union as committeemen at KMC. In recent past, [redacted] was reassigned to another job at facility and [redacted] discharged by KMC. NLRB advised that their investigation slanted toward civil action against KMC if violations substantiated. NLRB advised previously in contact with Departmental attorney, Criminal Division, General Crimes Section, who indicated that possible criminal violations present under Obstruction of Justice and/or AEA concerning [redacted] and [redacted].

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It is noted to date no receipt forthcoming from Department for Bureau to conduct Obstruction of Justice or AEA investigation regarding [redacted] or [redacted]. As previously set forth in memoranda, by letter 3/4/75, Assistant Attorney General (AAG), Criminal Division, was furnished all information available from NRC which had been received originally from OCAW pertaining to possible violations occurring at KMC. In this letter, Department

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Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Wannall
Re: Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation,
Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma

was asked to determine if investigations currently under way by this Bureau were a sufficient response to occurrences at KMC or if additional investigation should be instituted under provisions of the AEA or Title 18, U. S. Code, Sections 1505 and 1510. To date, no response to this letter has been received.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'Jma', is located to the right of the main text block.

March 5, 1975

FBI

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RECEIVED

MAR 10 12 58 PM '75

DEPT. OF JUSTICE
MAIL ROOM
OIGM

Ohio 44128

7/16

Dear Mr. Attorney General :

KAREN Silkwood

Please advise me as to the current status and findings regarding the death of Karen Silkwood, mentioned in the enclosed photo-copy of a New York Times article (Dec. 19, 1974) "A.E.C. studies 3 accidents at One Plant"

Please do not ignore this letter as I do intend to pursue the matter.

REC-23

159-4005-26

3 MAR 13 1975

CORRESPONDENCE

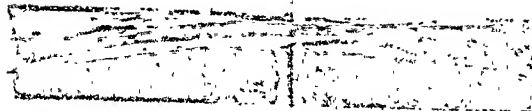
Thank you,

Sincerely,

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ENCLOSURE
RECORDED & INDEXED

NO ACK - PREVIOUS LETTER
MAR 28 1975
RECEIVED 3/12/75



159-4005-26

ENCLOSURE

has begins at

Bloomingdale's

"GOGGLES" FOR THE BLOOMINGDALE MAN.
per strong, super light plastic aviator frames, with
ound interchangeable lenses: yellow for grey days,
30.00. Men's Store, Main Level, New York only.

A.E.C. Studies 3 Accidents at One Plant

By DAVID BURNHAM

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18—The Atomic Energy Commission is investigating three incidents involving plutonium and uranium, that occurred at an Oklahoma nuclear facility on Monday.

As the commission dispatched a three-man team of investigators, the Kerr-McGee Corporation—operator of the nuclear facility near Crescent, Okla.—issued a brief statement saying it "has evidence that some of the incidents have been contrived."

The statement said further that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had been informed of the allegations and that the plant in question would suspend operations "until corrective action has been taken."

The Kerr-McGee nuclear facility is already the subject of three earlier A.E.C. investigations. Two of them involve allegations that the corporation manufactured faulty fuel rods, falsified inspection records and failed to take necessary precautions to protect the health of plant employees.

The third A.E.C. investigation centers on the plutonium contamination of Karen Silkwood, a 28-year-old laboratory technician who died in an automobile crash last month on her way to meet a reporter of The New York Times and a legislative assistant of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union.

The union's Washington representative, Anthony Mazzocchi, said in a telegram sent to Attorney General William B.

Saxton on Nov. 17 that a private investigator hired by the union had discovered evidence suggesting that Miss Silkwood's death might not have been an accident. The F.B.I. is looking into Miss Silkwood's death.

The latest series of incidents at the Kerr-McGee facility began early Monday when four employees were exposed to "airborne plutonium concentrations above the A.E.C.'s permissible limits," the commission said.

The A.E.C. said the contamination of the four workers occurred when a leak developed in the processing equipment permitting "about a gallon of a liquid containing plutonium to drain on the floor."

Plutonium is considered one of the most toxic substances known to man. Minute amounts of it have caused a high incidence of cancer in animals in a number of different experiments.

Shortly after the four workers were exposed to plutonium, another Kerr-McGee employee received plutonium contamination on the skin of her hand when she handled a package of scrap plutonium.

Sometime Monday evening, the A.E.C. said, about a dozen uranium pellets measuring three inches in diameter and an inch in length were found outside the uranium processing area but inside the fence surrounding the Kerr-McGee plant.

The commission said that because the pellets were only slightly enriched with uranium-239, they posed no threat to either employees or the public.

A spokesman for Kerr-McGee said the nuclear facility had about 300 employees and would take two or three days to close down in an orderly fashion. The spokesman declined to make any further comment or answer any question about why the company had decided to close the plant.

Paris Oppositor Loses Heavily in Censure Move

PARIS, Dec. 18 (UPI)—The National Assembly early today rejected a motion of censure filed by the Socialist-led Opposition against the Government of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

The motion denouncing the government's domestic, economic and social policies won only 183 of 490 votes, 63 short of the necessary majority.

The leftist Opposition controls only 180 votes in the 492-seat chamber. A censure

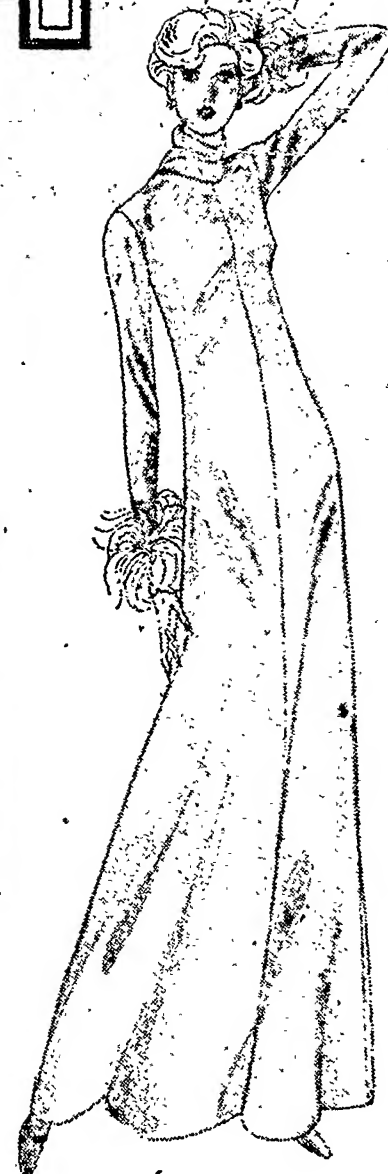
motion must be carried by an absolute majority to overthrow a cabinet.

The motion was introduced by the Socialist leader, François Mitterrand, who lost the presidential election to Mr. Giscard d'Estaing last May.

More Babies Get 'Bashed'

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP)

The annual number of reported cases of "baby bashing" by parents increased from four in 1970 to 30 as of September, 1974, says Dr. C. Irwin, a psychiatrist at the Johannesburg Children's Hospital.



159-4005-26



CULVERT FROM
SOUTH BANK

159-4005-6

~~28~~
12/3/74

View South (towards
culvert) ^{from} SH 74

AND SECTION LINE
ROAD

159-4005-6

~~28~~
12/3/74

F B I

Date: 3/17/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority)

TO DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)
 FROM SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (P)
 SUBJECT UNSUBS;
 Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased)
 LMRDA; OOJ
 OO: Oklahoma City

Re Oklahoma City airtel to Bureau, 3/11/75.

Enclosed herewith for the Bureau are six copies of LHM dated and captioned as above. One copy LHM is being furnished USA, Oklahoma City.

USA, Oklahoma City, only being furnished one copy of enclosed LHM inasmuch as contents of LHM are limited to reproduction of newspaper article.

Enclosed LHM sets forth self-explanatory article appearing in 3/27/75 edition of the Rolling Stone relative to captioned case. LHM being submitted for completion of Bureau files.

Deleted Copy Sent

Letter Dated 5-10-76

per FOIPA Request

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REC-11

EX-110

2cc ROM CRIM. DIV., by 0-6D
 1cc LABOR DESK, TICKLER
 ELR: maw

MAR 28 1975

MAR 20 1975

② - Bureau (Enc. 6)
 2 - Oklahoma City
 LJO:dah
 (4)

ENCLOSURE

Approved: 5 APR 01 1975

Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M

Per

ORIGINAL AND COPY OF ENCLOSED IN



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125
March 17, 1975

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No. 159-45

**Unknown Subjects;
Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased)
LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE
ACT OF 1959; OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE**

The March 27, 1975, issue, number 183, of the Rolling Stone, a by-weekly newspaper published at San Francisco, California, contained an article entitled "The Nuclear Industry's Terrible Power and How ~~it~~ Silenced Karen Silkwood," author Howard Kohn. The article is as follows:

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

151-45-77
ENCLOSURE

Dear Gentlemen,

The U.S. Government set off
an underground nuclear device testing on
Mar. 1, 1975 in Yucca Flats, New. Shock
waves from the blast destroyed one of our
headquarters near your testing area. Now
the U.S. Government must paid for the
destruction, time, cost, and the lives we spent
on this Project Fireball.

Project Fireball will
begin on Mar. 6, 1975 at 1300 hrs. and it will be ann-
ounced to the people. Target area will Phila.,
Pennsylvania, we have weapon-grade material
A-Bomb castings for the project. One will
be used as an example, the other to sell.

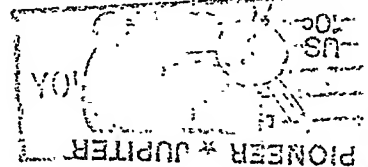
Yours Truly,

Thur. Fambin

Weather Underground

P.S. Karen G. Silkwood as, at Kerns-Wagner Corp. a
Cincinnati River plant, ~~she~~ knows
all about her work.

See
info on tel
to Dept. dated
3/2/75
1.59.405 (enclosed)



United States Arms Control
and Disarmament Agency
Department of State Building
Washington, D.C. 20451

TEXAS NEDERLAND AND HOW IT CHANGED

By Howard Kohn
Illustrations by [illegible]

She was 29, a slight woman, dark hair pushing past slender shoulders, haunting beauty nurtured in a small-child look. She was alone that chilly autumn night, driving her tiny three-door Honda through long stretches of prairie. The Oklahoma fields lay flattened under the crude brushworks of the wind, the grass unable to snap back to attention. Every few miles a big-boned rabbit, mangled and broken, littered the roadside. A couple years back she had fired off a roving of angry letters when sheep ranchers staged rabbit roundups, enabling to death the furry army that had sprung up on the prairie. She was like that, poking her opinions where they weren't welcome.

In the early evening darkness of Wednesday, November 13th, 1974, Karen Silkwood was on an environmental mission of another sort. On the seat beside her lay a manila folder with apparent proof that records were being falsified at the plutonium plant where she worked. Waiting at a Holiday Inn 30 miles away were a union official and a *New York Times* reporter who had just flown from Washington D.C. to Oklahoma City to meet with her.

They waited nearly an hour. Then they picked up the phone.

Karen Silkwood's body had already been found in a small rivulet along Highway 74 where rabbits often come to drink. Her car had swerved left across the highway, skittered about 170 feet along an embankment, smashed head-on into a culvert wingwall, lurching through the air and caromed off another culvert wall, coming to rest in the muddy stream.

Her death was ruled an accident: the police decided she was asleep at the wheel. But the union official was not satisfied. The manila folder was missing. And a private investigator discovered two fresh dents in the rear of her car: telltale marks of a hit-and-run.

Even in the dead of winter it can be a steamy 80° in Nederland, Texas, a bottom-line speck on the map best known as the hometown of the late Howard Kohn, a freelance writer, was raised on a farm outside of Auburn, Michigan, and was a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*.

Tex ("Hill Country Heaven") Ritter. Nederland is tucked in the southeastern crook of the Longhorn State, a half-hour's drive from the Gulf of Mexico but within mosquito-flying distance of the bogs and bayous. It is a small town with a limited sense of local color. Its most exotic avenues are driveways paved with seashells from the Gulf. Lowing Herefords munch and ruminate in back yards until ready for the oven. A windmill-shaped museum pays tribute to turn-of-the-century Dutch ancestors.

But the most eye-watering landmarks of Nederland are the giant oil refineries obscuring the horizon, coughing out a gray, sinister fog. This corner of Texas produces 10% of the nation's oil supply; it is Texaco-Mobil-Gulf country, where there are seldom discouraging words about an energy crisis. When the wind is right, which is often, a thick, fetid odor settles over Nederland, clinging to food and clothes, gagging unwary strangers. The smell might explain why Tex Ritter skipped Nederland's golden anniversary shivaree or why young families leave good-paying jobs to go elsewhere. But the air also reeks of big money. As state Representative Billy Williamson remarked last year when someone suggested shutting down the stinking refineries: "I think we are all willing to have a little bit of crud in our lungs. . . I don't need some bunch of do-gooders telling me what's good to breathe."

Karen Silkwood never forget the dirty air and sweet stench. When her teachers talked of a new technology that would eliminate the stink and mess of oil, she was captivated. The clean purr of nuclear power: That was the hope of the future. On her own time Karen enrolled in a six-week course on radiation. In her senior year she was accepted into her high school's advanced chemistry class, and her father, the town's premier housepainter, dreamed of his daughter as a scientist. But when her mother, a gentle-faced housewife who was enlightened as a bank clerk, discovered Karen was the only girl in her chemistry class, there was a confrontation. "I thought she should be in something like home economics, and I told the chemistry teacher I wanted her out," she says. "But he finally made me change my mind. He said she was a better student than the boys."

Karen was an intense, serious girl who slanned the local teenage hot-spots for library reading and volunteer work at a hospital. Her acquaintances remember only one irritating characteristic: She talked back to her teachers, correcting them with an unceasing firmness when they slipped up, say, on the atomic weight of tritium. "She was," says one old friend, "a very nice person who always wanted to be right about everything."

She graduated in 1964 with a college scholarship and best wishes from everyone. At nearby Lamar College Karen pursued her science interests, settling on a career as a laboratory analyst, perhaps in nuclear physics.

But before her sophomore year ended, she was whisked away from her studies by a good-looking guy with a promising future as a pipeline supervisor at Mobil Oil. It was seven years, three kids, one bankruptcy and a divorce later before she returned to her earlier ambitions. In August 1972 she left her husband and children, resumed her maiden name and took a job away from the smelterstacks of Texas as a laboratory technician for one of the nuclear 'ole. Karen McKee Corporation of Oklahoma City.

[Continued from p. 11]

Now, a month later, Christmas was at hand. In the Silkwood house a make-believe pine tree had been stuck in a dark corner; the most conspicuous spot in the living room was reserved for a photo collage of their three daughters: Linda, Rosemary and Karen.

"Karen was fixing to come home." Her mother dabbed softly at her eyes. "She wanted to get away. She was so scared. I wish now I had made her come home when she called that day."

Her expression turned steely. "We never did appreciate Karen as much as we should have. I don't think anyone did. Even now they don't. Look what she did. She gave her life to save others."

The Silkwoods were still trying to sort out what had happened, to find answers to ease their minds. They kept pondering the central mystery—how was Karen killed? Had the Quaalude rendered her in an "unconscious or hypnotic state," or had someone stolen out of the darkness, a mugger armed with power-drive, to dead-end her into the culvert? "I know that working for that company is what killed her," her father said. "But I would still like to know if it was an accident or if it was murder."

The Silkwoods are now considering filing a civil suit against the company. It may be one way, they have been advised, to flush out some answers. Kerr-McGee, according to one source, is already preparing for a suit.

So far the investigation is a stalemate.

In January the Oklahoma Highway Patrol reopened the case for six days, reexamining the evidence and reaching the same conclusion. Actually, it didn't reexamine all the evidence. It couldn't.

Along Highway 74 the Honda's tire tracks had been sloughed away by a tractor-grader—reportedly less than 24 hours after A.O. Pipkin had inspected the scene in his Day-Glo orange jumpsuit. The stretch of highway had then been repaved on one side, making it difficult to tell in which direction a sleepy driver might drift.

The Honda was still available. But the State Highway Patrol regarded it as unreliable evidence since it had been out of its possession.

At the request of OCAW International, however, three other auto-crash experts have now scrutinized the car. All three agree with Pipkin that the dents could not have been caused by the concrete culvert. Dr. E.L. Martin of Albuquerque, New Mexico, who put the Honda bumper under a microscope, said the bumper dent resulted from "contact between two metal surfaces." It is highly probable, accord-

ing to these experts, that another car slammed into the Honda as Silkwood drove toward the Holiday Inn Northwest.

Was the other driver a hired killer? Or a loose drunk? No investigator knows.

The three men who waited for Silkwood that night think someone was trying a scare tactic that got out of hand.

If Silkwood did have apodictic proof of fraud, then several people conceivably had motives for intimidating her: a plant supervisor afraid of going to prison for falsifying records; a company higher-up who feared a fraud scandal would mean multimillion-dollar losses; a plant worker who felt that Silkwood, in effect, was threatening his livelihood; or an AEC official who worried she would jeopardize the entire fast-breeder program.

Timesman David Burnham has spent several weeks dogging the Highway Patrol for answers; he is now hopeful that the Justice Department, which has now entered the case at the request of the OCAW, will pursue a more thorough investigation.

Drew Stephens, who now works in a Volkswagen bodyshop, bought a holster, a box of cartridges and a .38 revolver shortly after the crash. He suspected he was being followed and that his phone was tapped. He has stopped leaving his front door unlocked. In an 8"x11" notebook, he keeps a diary of every clue, any skittish rumor that might turn into a case cracker, then turns these over to the OCAW International. By spring, he says, he will be packing his van and heading cross-country. "There's nothing left for me here." His voice is muted. "Not unless they find who killed Karen."

At OCAW headquarters Steve Wodka has found it difficult to return to other chores. The Silkwood case keeps nagging him. There are too many unanswered questions. For instance, how did Silkwood become contaminated a week before her death? For weeks afterwards Wodka kept the results of her Los Alamos tests scribbled on an OCAW blackboard, trying to puzzle out the mystery. The most logical explanation, he decided, was that Silkwood had been contaminated at the plant and unknowingly carried the plutonium home with her. But then the AEC reported that this would have been virtually impossible, given her duties at the plant during the time immediately preceding her contamination.

So now Wodka has come reluctantly to believe she was poisoned. "Someone must have entered her apartment and placed the plutonium in her refrigerator. That's the only way it could have gotten

on the cheese and bologna. We've heard from several sources, including the AEC, that Karen had been seen going through the files, looking for records. Someone apparently figured out what she was up to. One sure way of preventing her from gathering any more evidence would have been to poison her, maybe scare her into leaving."

Wodka also cites another AEC finding: Extra plutonium apparently had been added to four of the urine samples Silkwood gave to Kerr-McGee for analysis in late October and early November. "I think someone tampered with these samples, hoping to get her out of the plant or at least confuse the issue."

Kerr-McGee officials have advanced a different conspiracy theory, passed along in off-the-record conversations with local reporters. Kerr-McGee suggests that Silkwood contaminated herself to embarrass the company. According to this theory, Silkwood smuggled a plutonium capsule out of the plant, either by swallowing it or slipping it up her vagina or anus—all suicidal maneuvers. Cited as evidence is the coincidence that Silkwood was first contaminated November 5th, the day before the company was to begin new contract negotiations with the OCAW. But, even assuming that Silkwood had become a frenzied zealot, this theory does not explain why she thought getting contaminated in her apartment would embarrass the company, or why the company would get red faced over any contamination after 73 cases in four years.

Nonetheless, Oklahoma City media has popularized this theory. One state representative, a liberal, shakes his head. "I can't understand that dame, shoving plutonium up her ass like that." And some townspeople have added their own twist, announcing with a wink that "I hear she was a drug-crazy hippie who put this plutonium junk in her mary jew anna."

The OCAW International has pledged not to give up until the case is solved.

"Karen was a very unusual person," Wodka says. "She stood up to the company. She was outspoken. She was very brave, now that we look back on it; in many ways she was a lone voice. She was willing to go ahead when other people were afraid."

"She died for a cause," agrees Ilene Younghein. "She will be remembered as a martyr."

At NRC, the regulatory division of the new AEC, she will be remembered, too. The commission has begun a file on her. It reads: "Silkwood, Karen . . . Former employee, Kerr-McGee."

mission (NRC). The change went into effect January 1st of this year.

Most ERDA officials are old AEC officials who are not likely to repudiate the AEC's longstanding commitment to nuclear power. But, charged with developing all varieties of energy, ERDA will take a new look at solar power, which the AEC virtually ignored. And it will reexamine the AEC's plans for 1000 nuclear reactors (including 150 fast-breeders) by the end of the century.

NRC officials, on the other hand, promise a new tenacity for stopping nuclear abuses. By the middle of February the NRC had ordered the temporary closing of 23 plants to look for cracks in the pipes of their emergency systems. If the NRC hangs tough, say environmentalists, the industry will either have to change radically—or there will be no industry at all.

The more Peter Faulkner found out, the more convinced he became that nuclear plants need a new set of rules to assure quality control. In the five plants where he'd worked as a field engineer he had seen the same mistakes and the same sloppiness repeated over and over.

So Faulkner took his proposal to his employer, Nuclear Services Corporation of California, a top consulting firm that deals with nuclear plants before and after they are built. It was turned down.

But Faulkner, an ex-captain in the Strategic Air Command, an author, a 20-year engineer and at Yale a member of the same secret society as Senator John Tunney, decided to take his proposal to Congress. On March 12th, 1974, Faulkner told a congressional committee it needed to get tough with the nuclear industry. Three weeks later he was fired.

Now Faulkner is forming a society of nuclear critics who have lost their jobs. Among those eligible for the society are several former AEC scientists. "The industry already has several organizations that promote it," Faulkner says. "People need a professional group telling what is really going on."

All her old clothes were under quarantine, suspected of plutonium contamination, so Karen Silkwood was buried in a new dress. No Kerr-McGee officials made the journey to Texas for the funeral, nor any AEC officials.

Afterwards Karen's parents returned to the green frame house where she grew up. An old high-school friend of Karen's came over to comfort the Silkwoods and spent the evening weeping in anger. Karen's youngest sister, a high-school junior, said that what happened to Karen had inspired her to become a career woman who would call her own shots. [Cont. on 62]

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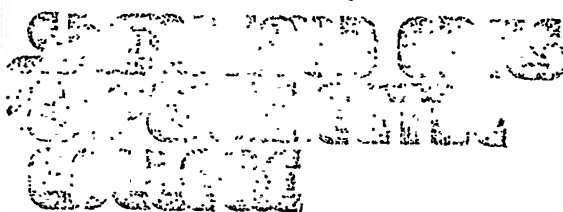
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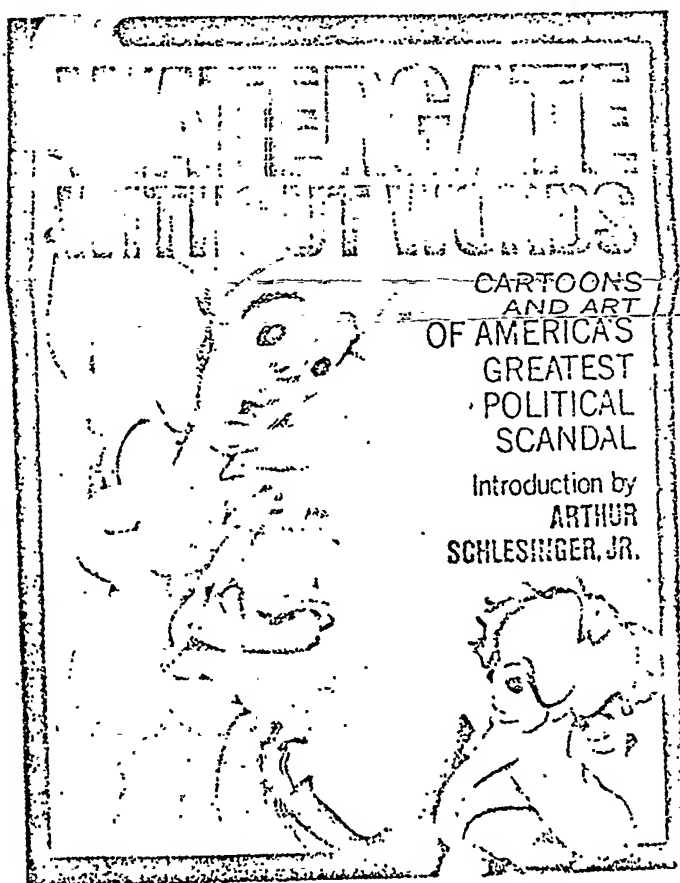
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A Special Project

[Cont. from 59] dents since the 1940s — including one leak that dribbled 115,000 gallons out of a tank unnoticed for 51 days.

Over the years the AEC had shrugged at multiple warnings that should have sounded sirens:

- A study by two AEC scientists in 1969 that predicted 32,000 more annual deaths from cancer if every American were exposed to the allowable radiation doses set by the AEC;

- An AEC laboratory test in 1970 in which the key emergency safety system for conventional nuclear reactors failed to work in six of six attempts;

- A 1974 AEC investigation that showed radiation levels in the lunchroom at a Tennessee nuclear plant were eight times too high;

- A *Science* magazine report revealing that a plant in Buffalo, New York, was recruiting beer-garden drones because conditions were too "hot" for regular employees;

- Accidents that spilled 1000 gallons of radioactive water into the Illinois River, leaked plutonium into Ohio's Erie Canal, sent radioactive dust out a chimney in a New York plant and increased the chances of cancer in hundreds of workers at dozens of plants;

- The 271 fires and 410 contamination cases at the AEC's only facility for mass production of plutonium parts used in atom bombs, eight miles upwind from Denver, Colorado. (In May 1969 this plant harbored the most expensive fire in industrial history: improperly stored cans of plutonium ignited and destroyed \$50 million of delicate equipment. Over a year later, General E.B. Giller, director of the AEC's division of military applications, admitted the fire had been a "near catastrophe." Had it burned through the roof—and it nearly did—"hundreds of square miles could [have been] involved in radiation exposure." The *Denver Post* has since reported that workers at the plant have a cancer rate seven times higher than the national average.)

In some cases the AEC has released data only after environmentalists filed lawsuits under the Freedom of Information Act.

But the nuclear coverup seems to be coming unglued. And there is a new crisis of confidence in the nuclear industry. In January the *New York Times* reported that because of recent criticism the industry is nearly doubling its funds for lobbying with politicians, reporters and labor officials.

There is even a question now whether nuclear power at its best can be efficient. During January 1974, the worst period of the energy crisis, 22 of the nation's 31 commercial nuclear reactors were closed down for all or part of the

month. Even when they are operating they provide less than 10% of the country's energy needs. By contrast, science writer Isaac Asimov estimates that solar cells, say in the Mojave Desert, could supply the present energy needs of the entire world.

More crucial is the issue of safety. Several nuclear plants have actually piled up more AEC violations than Kerr-McGee's. And the Environmental Protection Agency has recently joined the growing queue of leading scientists and authorities who contend the AEC has greatly underestimated nuclear risks. It is not simply the past record that frightens them; it is the potential for future disaster. No fail-safe systems have been devised to meet problems like these:

TRANSPORTATION. In 1970 a shipping mixup sent a drum of uranium to Tijuana, Mexico, an error the AEC labeled "Inadvertent export of special nuclear materials." Even if such mistakes aren't repeated, what about plutonium-loaded trucks or trains that crack up?

WASTE. Eventually the fast-breeders will produce tons of plutonium that must be disposed of. Because burying it is risky experts have suggested firing it into space. But what about rocket-pad explosions or "short shots" that fall back to earth?

IGNORANCE. Last fall sailors aboard Japan's first nuclear-powered ship tried to plug a radioactive leak with boiled rice and old socks.

TERRORISM. Only 4.4 pounds of plutonium is needed for a bomb capable of flattening downtown Peoria. What about such grandiose leaders as the shah of Iran, who fancies himself another Alexander the Great and who just bought five nuclear reactors from France? Or just some stray kook who gets his hands on plutonium?

THEFT. In 1972 the General Accounting Office ran a security check and found that one man, equipped with an adjustable pocket wrench and a strong arm, could break into a nuclear plant and obtain fissionable material within minutes. What about saboteurs who infiltrate a plant's working force? What kind of police state tactics will become necessary to protect our nuclear industry?

ACTS OF GOD. A Virginia nuclear plant was unknowingly built on a geological fault. Can nuclear plants survive earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural catastrophes?

No one knows for certain—including the AEC, which, nevertheless, has always been willing to risk finding out.

Congress, apparently fearing the AEC's dotting optimism, has now replaced it with two agencies: the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) and the Nuclear Regulatory Com-

asked questions like: "Have you ever talked to the media?" Although of questionable legality, the polygraphs were required of most plutonium workers as a "security precaution" before they could return to their jobs. A Kerr-McGee official described company strategy in a conversation with Jack Taylor, ace reporter for the *Daily Oklahoman*: "We're going to tool back up slowly and hire people who are trustworthy and are not involved [in the union]." As for undesirables—"You don't have to tell them [anything]. You can just say, 'You didn't clear security.'"

Along with Brewer, five other workers who snubbed or failed the polygraphs were handed pink slips. Jack Tice, the third union committeeman to make the trip to Washington, has been transferred to the most isolated part of the plant. "This action was taken in retaliation for union activities," the OCAW International has charged in a formal complaint to the National Labor Relations Board. "and to prevent [Tice] from discussing grievances or other union business with other employees." The OCAW also is challenging the six firings.

Among the six was Dusty Ellis, the cowgirl who shared the contaminated apartment with Silkwood. After her roommate's death Ellis initially cooperated with Kerr-McGee, refusing to talk to either the OCAW or the media. At one point she was seen, red-eyed and distraught, being escorted by two company detectives away from the Edmond Broadway Motor Inn where she had been staying, compliments of Kerr-McGee. Then Ellis—without explanation—aired a suggestion that Silkwood may have been pilfering plutonium from the plant. Shortly thereafter Kerr-McGee reportedly offered Ellis \$1000 as payment for any claims she might have against the company.

But Ellis turned down the offer. She began worrying that she had been more seriously contaminated than she had been told; her gums bothered her and she had trouble sleeping. In late December she hired a lawyer and threatened to sue the company for copies of all her health records. Three weeks later she was fired. (Two weeks after that, in early February, Ellis told friends that twice someone had tried, and failed, to break into her new apartment.)

During the month between the plant shutdown and the firings, the AEC had published the results of its investigation. (According to a *Daily Oklahoman* story, Kerr-McGee officials received a copy of the report well ahead of its official release, apparently in violation of AEC rules.) Company officials, who had been refusing comment since Karen Silkwood's death except to say,

"We will let the AEC speak for us," pronounced themselves pleased with the findings.

On the question of falsified records the AEC did locate one former worker who admitted using a felt-tip pen to touch up photo negatives that measured the welding on plutonium fuel rods. The worker, however, said he acted only to make his job easier and not under orders from Kerr-McGee. Without Silkwood's documents, the AEC reported, it could find no other hard proof. But the OCAW questioned whether the AEC was really looking. According to the OCAW, the AEC lied when it claimed to have interviewed a worker who disputed Silkwood's allegations of fraud. This worker, the OCAW says, has given the union a sworn affidavit that the AEC never interviewed him—and that he believes quality controls are not adequate.

Whether Kerr-McGee's plutonium fuel rods are safe and adequate for use is still unknown; they have yet to be tested at the AEC facility in Richland.

On the question of plant safety, the AEC reported that 20 of the 39 grievances it examined were true or partially true: Plutonium had been stored in a desk drawer instead of a prescribed vault; in various incidents, employees had been forced to work in areas not tested for contamination or where leaks remained; in another, the company failed to report a serious leak that had forced it to close the plant in May 1974; generally, respirators had not been checked regularly for deficiencies; few workers had been properly trained.

Such disregard for safety, the AEC decided, merited no censure beyond adding these new citations to the trove already in the Kerr-McGee files. Kerr-McGee was free to resume its role in the AEC's fast-breeder program, a program that might have been seriously compromised had Kerr-McGee been forced to close up shop permanently.

Younghein and other environmentalists professed no surprise at the AEC's lack of action. The AEC had never summoned the courage to penalize Kerr-McGee in the past. The AEC had managed to levy only eight penalties during a 12-month period in 1973-74, even though its inspectors had found 3333 violations. In 1972 during a hearing on nuclear safety, the AEC had given its scientists written instructions to "never disagree with established policy." And at a nuclear waste dumping grounds in Washington, the AEC has been in charge while half a million gallons of "hot" effluent, enough to fill four railroad cars, have been spilled onto the ground in numerous acci- [Cont. on 61]

SILKWOOD

[Continued from 46]

"If the public knew what the facts are and if they had to choose between nuclear reactors and candles, they would choose candles."

—Ralph Nader

"When we think of having several thousand reactors as we are talking about having, [we could] have a serious accident once every three years, losing a city for example."

—Dr. John Gofman, former AEC associate lab director

"In the nuclear industry... no acts of God can be permitted."

—Dr. Hannes Alfvén, Nobel laureate in physics

"In spite of soothing reassurances the AEC gives to the uninformed, misled public, unresolved questions about nuclear power safety are so grave that the U.S. should consider a complete halt to nuclear power plant construction while we see if these serious questions can be resolved."

—Carl H. Hoevevar, former AEC safety expert

On December 20th, five weeks after Karen Silkwood's death, Kerr-McGee temporarily closed its plutonium plant. These were trying days for the company. Supporters of Kerr-McGee found it necessary to print ads reminding Oklahomans that Dun & Bradstreet had recently named it among the five best-managed corporations in the country. But headlines kept popping up all over, thanks to the *New York Times* wire service, telling of a mysterious death, falsified records and ill-trained workers at the world's most dangerous poisons.

Nuclear proponents were worried, especially those of the nuclear elite like Dean McGee, who had been helping babysit plans for a multibillion-dollar "nuclear park" near flag-waving Muskogee in northeastern Oklahoma — it would be a carnie midway of over 20 facilities, the boldest assortment of nuclear props ever assembled. Even Muskogee's proud-to-be-Okies were beginning to flinch. "The bad publicity," complained Senator Henry Bellmon, a big McGee booster, "is making it more difficult to get what we want in the Muskogee area."

But the controversy around Kerr-McGee would not quit. Hints of strange goings-on salted the news. Robert G. Bathe, a plutonium worker, reported to police that a motorist had "harassed" him as he drove home from the plant a few nights after Silkwood's death; when Bathe's statement leaked to the press, he and the police suddenly refused to discuss the incident. Shortly afterwards, however, *Timesman* David Burnham reported that

security at the plant was so atrophied that 60 pounds of plutonium — enough for five Nagasaki bombs — were unaccounted for and possibly missing, an allegation Kerr-McGee heatedly denied.

The most prickly burr in the wind, though, was the AEC investigation, which promised a full report on Kerr-McGee.

On December 17th, at the height of the AEC investigation, Kerr-McGee was forced to announce that five more employees had been contaminated at its plutonium plant. The company claimed it had evidence the accidents were contrived, a modest slander suggesting that workers sniffed poison to embarrass their bosses. Though Kerr-McGee said it had given its evidence to the FBI, the FBI denied receiving it. Nonetheless, three days later, Kerr-McGee handed out lay-off slips, announcing the plant would not reopen until the payroll was checked for security.

Closing the plant five days before Christmas effectively reminded the workers how close they were, in hard times, to standing in line for unemployment checks; some feared talking to AEC investigators might further jeopardize their jobs. (Earlier in December, rather than risk losing their jobs to a gang of strikebreakers, the workers of Local 5-283 had ratified a new contract that again fell far short of their demands.)

Predictably, the plant shutdown ruptured the tentative alliance between the plutonium workers and local environmentalists. To Ilene Younghein, the shutdown was a first step to victory; to Frank Murch, a middle-aged man with seven years' experience in the pocketbook: "You're damn right I'm bitter about this. I'm bitter at the environmentalists. It's a hell of a thing, putting this many people out of work." Some took to blaming the dead — one worker who earlier had talked about honoring Karen Silkwood with a special grave marker now spat at the mention of her name.

"Attitudes changed," says Gerald Brewer. "People started to blame Karen for getting thrown out of work right before the holidays." Brewer was one of the two union committee members who accompanied Silkwood to Washington in September. He had worked at the plant three years.

In early January, after plutonium production resumed, Brewer was demoted from his job and transferred to an isolated warehouse. Two weeks later he was fired. There was no official explanation; a company spokesman was still denying the firing five days later. Brewer's apparent sin, besides his role in compiling the grievances, was his refusal to submit to a polygraph test that

him to pick up Wodka and Burnham at the airport and to expect her at the motor hotel about 8 p.m. She sounded normal, Stephens remembers, perhaps a bit excited about having an audience with the *New York Times*. At 7:15 p.m. Silkwood left the Hub Cafe and headed for Highway 74 and the Holiday Inn Northwest. A fellow union member would later swear in an affidavit that Silkwood, minutes before she left the restaurant, was carrying a manila folder an inch thick with papers. The folder, Silkwood told the union member, contained proof that quality-control records were being falsified.

Thirty miles away, Wodka, Burnham and Stephens waited for that proof until 8:45. Then they picked up the phone; but for some reason the Holiday Inn lines were out of order, and another hour passed before the three could get through.

Meanwhile, at 8:05 p.m., a truck driver, sitting high up in his cab and rolling along the two-lane highway, spotted the white Honda, almost hidden in the muddy culvert. Silkwood had traveled about seven miles from the Hub Cafe, a ten-minute drive.

By the time Stephens, Wodka and Burnham learned the news from a local union member, the 1638-pound Civic Hatchback already had been towed to Ted Sebring's garage in Crescent. And Silkwood had been pronounced dead on arrival at the Guthrie Hospital, the victim of multiple and compound fractures.

The three men raced to the culvert, only a mile from the plutonium plant, and prowled about, stepping gingerly through the mud, which in Oklahoma is the color of dry blood. All they could find were shards of aluminum trim, the orange roadside reflectors that had been trampled by the bouncing car and Silkwood's uncashed paycheck.

Later they found the wreck locked up in Sebring's garage and peered at it through the window. They stopped at the home of union committeeman Jack Tice, one of the last to see Silkwood alive; Stephens called Silkwood's parents. Then they returned to the culvert, searching for an explanation in the tire tracks and the scraps of metal.

The explanation the State Highway Patrol offered was that Karen Silkwood, exhausted after driving 600 miles from Los Alamos to Oklahoma City, had fallen asleep and drifted off the road to an accidental death. Almost immediately the police had to alter their official version when they were told Silkwood had flown from Los Alamos and had gotten a full night's sleep only 12 hours before the crash.

The second official version was somewhat more convincing. Sometime during the afternoon of November 13th Silkwood had gulped down at least one of the pasty white Quaaludes from the vial in her coat pocket. Oklahoma City's chief forensic toxicologist, Richard W. Prouty, discovered .35 milligrams of methaqualone in her bloodstream, conceivably enough to lull her to sleep on the highway.

But that was not sufficient for Steve Wodka.

Silkwood had swallowed several Quaaludes in the past week without nodding out. Why would she fall into a trance on her way to an extremely crucial meeting? And the proof of fraud she was supposedly carrying had disappeared. Her personal effects, listed by the medical examiner, included an ID badge, an electronic security key (for the plant), two marijuana cigarettes, a Kotex pad, two used Kleen-

exes, a Bradley Mickey Mouse pocket watch, a small notebook, her clothes; \$7 in bills and \$1.69 in change. But there was no manila folder heavy with Kerr-McGee documents.

Trooper Rick Fagan, however, had mentioned finding dozens of loose papers blowing about the accident scene when he first arrived. Fagan had plucked up the papers, he told his superiors, and shoved them into the Honda. According to the highway patrol's information officer, Lieutenant Kenneth Vanhoy, the papers were in the Honda when Ted Sebring hauled the car away.

Presumably they were still there at 12:30 a.m.—five hours after the accident—when Sebring unlocked his garage for a group of Kerr-McGee and AEC representatives who said they wanted to check out Silkwood's car for plutonium contamination.

But by the next afternoon when Stephens, Wodka and Burnham claimed Silkwood's car from Sebring, no papers were inside.

Wodka called Tony Mazzocchi at OCAW International. Mazzocchi agreed: An outside expert was needed to investigate the crash.

Three days after Silkwood's death an auto-crash expert arrived in Oklahoma City from the Accident Reconstruction Lab of Dallas. A.O. Pipkin, an ex-cop, is a veteran of 2000 accidents and 300 court trials, a no-nonsense pro considered the best man around for piecing together an accident scenario.

Dressed in a Day-Glo orange jumpsuit, Pipkin examined the Honda and found two curious dents, one in the rear bumper, another in the rear fender. They were fresh; there was no road dirt in them. And they appeared to have been made by a car bumper.

At the scene Pipkin noted that the Honda had crossed over the yellow lines and hit the culvert on the left side of the highway. If Silkwood had nodded into a stupor, he reasoned, she would have drifted to the right. In the red clay, Pipkin found something else the police apparently disregarded: tire tracks indicating the car had been out of control before it left the highway.

Pipkin's disconcerting conclusion: Karen Silkwood's Honda had been hit from the rear by another vehicle.

Larry Bogart's last job was special assistant to the chairman of the board at Allied Chemical. But in 1966 he decided to take time off to oppose the construction of a nuclear plant near his home in Allendale, New Jersey. He has been fighting nuclear companies ever since; he is now coordinator of a 40-state coalition of antinuclear groups.

On a wintry evening in 1971 Bogart was driving his Volkswagen on the New Jersey Turnpike, heading for a meeting where he was scheduled to speak against nuclear power. Another car, he says, zoomed up alongside and forced him off the highway. His Volkswagen bounced off a guardrail, skidded wildly but did not roll over. He was shook up but unhurt.

On two other occasions, Bogart says, his car has been tampered with; once the accelerator rod had been sawed through. Visitors to his office, he says, run the risk of being photographed by lurking private eyes.

"Environmentalists tend to be naive," Bogart says. "They think that if they prove nuclear power is dangerous it will automatically follow that change will come. They don't realize that big money is controlling the business."

[Continued on 58]

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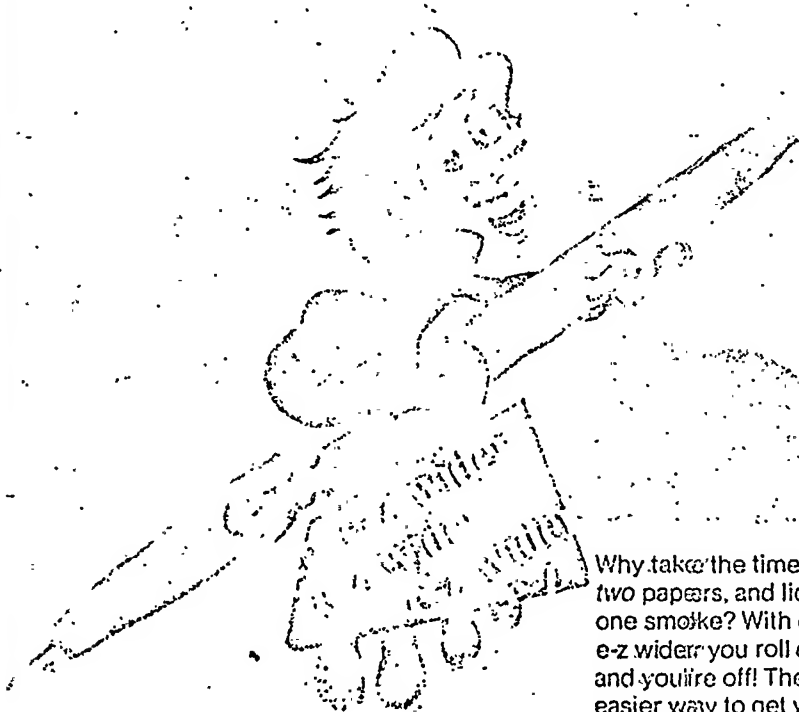
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On the day the mystery repeated itself—and a nasal smear indicated she also was contaminated internally.

How much plutonium, she wanted to know, could a person ingest before it burned out her insides?

Wodka tried to reassure her and promised to fly in. Silkwood hung up and sought out her old lover. "She was damn near incoherent," says Stephens. "She was crying and shaking like a leaf; she kept saying she was going to die."

Again she picked up the phone and called long distance. Minneapolis. Dr. Dean Abrahamson. She wanted medical advice from a physician. She told him that somehow, somewhere, she had gotten plutonium all over her, inside and out. "She knew what the medical implications were," recalls Dr. Abrahamson, "and she was worried."

A team of Kerr-McGee inspectors, armed with alpha counters, full-face respirators, special galoshes, taped up gloves and white coveralls, were meanwhile hunting the source of the plutonium. There had been no recent accident at the plant to account for her contamination. So, at Silkwood's request, they had trekked to her apartment. There the alpha counters commenced eerie gibberings. Plutonium, in small quantities, was everywhere. Outside on the lawn the inspectors filed a 55-gallon drum with alarm clocks, cosmetics, record albums, drapes, pots and pans, shampoo, bedsheets. Alongside they stacked chairs, bed, stove, refrigerator, television, items to be trucked to the Kerr-McGee plant for later burial in an AEC-approved site.

The plutonium trail turned hottest in the kitchen, inside the refrigerator. A package of bologna and a package of cheese were the two most contaminated items in the apartment. Apparently, the plutonium had been tracked around the apartment from the refrigerator. But no one could explain how two sandwich foods had become the source of contamination.

The apartment was sealed off and the AEC called in.

Silkwood, however, was more worried about the plutonium inside her than on the cheese and bologna. She kept popping the Quaaludes that had been prescribed a few weeks before. "The Quaaludes were just supposed to be taken for sleeping at nights," Stephens says. "But she was using them during the day, just to calm down. I'd never seen her so scared."

Wodka had jetted in from Washington and, after talking to Kerr-McGee and AEC officials, had helped arrange for Silkwood to fly to an AEC laboratory in New Mexico to be checked out for poisoning. On Sunday November 10th, five days after her first contamination, she boarded a Braniff airliner.

That same morning a front-page *New York Times* story reported that, according to the AEC's own internal documents, the AEC had "repeatedly sought to suppress studies by its own scientists that found nuclear reactors were more dangerous than officially acknowledged or that raised questions about reactor safety devices." One AEC study, kept confidential for seven years, predicted that a major nuclear accident could kill up to 45,000 persons and pollute an area the size of Pennsylvania. *Times* reporter David Burnham, who in 1970 interviewed Frank Serpico and broke open the New York police corruption scandal, had sifted through hundreds of memos and letters and learned the AEC had a ten-year record of blue-penciling alarming data, soft-soaping test failures and

glad-handing industry that increasingly appeared not to know what it was doing.

The report gave scant comfort to Silkwood as she flew to Los Alamos, New Mexico, site of the world's first plutonium explosion during the A-bomb tests of World War II. With her were Stephens and Sherri "Dusty" Ellis, her roommate of the past few months, a blonde, rawboned, 21-year-old rodeo champ. Ellis also worked at the plant but had refused to get involved in Silkwood's efforts to unmask the company.

Now the three shared the same fears; all had been contaminated in the apartment.

For two days they underwent a "whole body count," a meticulous probing of skin, orifices, intestines and lungs, urinating at intervals into plastic bottles and defecating into Freezette box containers.

After the first day, the three had cause for relief. Dr. George Voelz, the health division leader, assured them they had suffered no immediate damage. Even Silkwood, by far the most infected, was told she was in no danger of dying from plutonium poisoning.

On Tuesday November 12th, Silkwood called her mother to announce the good news about the tests, but added, "I'm still a little scared. I still don't know how I got contaminated. I feel like someone's using me for a guinea pig."

"I told her to come home," her mother recalled. "And she said she would. She said she was ready for a vacation . . . she just had to do a couple things first."

After more body-prying tests at Los Alamos, the three travelers flew back to Oklahoma City, landing about 10:30 Tuesday night. Because the women's apartment had been gutted of furniture, they checked in at Stephens's bungalow, now a bachelor's pad papered with four-color profiles of racing cars clipped from hotrod magazines. Silkwood wandered over to her favorite radiator vent, squatting and rubbing to warm up, then went to bed early. She had a busy day ahead. She had told Wodka she would give him the evidence she was collecting as soon as she returned from Los Alamos, and Wodka had set up a meeting with her and David Burnham, the *Times* reporter, who was winging in from the East Coast. The meeting was scheduled for Wednesday night at the Holiday Inn Northwest in Oklahoma City.

Wednesday morning Silkwood drove to work. Contract negotiations between Local 5-283 and Kerr-McGee had begun the week before and, as a committeewoman, she was supposed to take part in the bargaining. She spent the morning in negotiations, arguing the union demands for better safety training and higher injury benefits. In the afternoon she met for several hours with AEC inspectors, who were trying to unravel the mystery of her contamination.

At 5:15 p.m. she drove to Crescent, about five miles from the plant, and stopped at the Hub Cafe for a supper meeting, sans supper, to discuss negotiations strategy with Local 5-283. Jack Tice, who headed the negotiating team, told the assembled union members that, as expected, Kerr-McGee was not budging off its hard line.

Silkwood excused herself about 6 p.m. to telephone Stephens, reminding

"I told her to calm down, to forget about it," Stephens remembers.

Six days before Silkwood's Washington trip, Stephens had abruptly quit, riled by a sudden transfer. "When I first went to work there I wanted to be the world's greatest laboratory technician. Now I never wanted to see the place again.

"But Karen felt differently. She wanted to reform the place. She had tried to go through channels and she'd gotten very frustrated. But when she came back from Washington she was really excited. This was her chance to do something. She figured things were really going to change."

On October 10th, two of the nation's leading plutonium experts arrived in Oklahoma City from the University of

fuel rods was too much. "They [company supervisors] are still passing bad welds no matter what the pictures look like," she said in a telephone conversation that Wodka taped. "I have a weld I would love for you to see, just how far they ground it down to relax the weld trying to get rid of the voids, the occlusions and the cracks." (Unsafe fuel rods, according to MIT physicist Dr. Henry Kendall, could lead to "an accident that would result in the release of huge amounts of radioactivity.")

Silkwood spent the weeks of October staying after hours, poring over files, recording every questionable procedure, building a dossier in a dog-eared manila folder. She did not know then that other employees had noticed her spying, and that the plant rumormongers were abuzz with suspicions about what she was up to.

"I have guilt feelings about those weeks," Stephens says. "I should have talked to her more, been with her more, helped her out. . . . But I just wanted to forget about the place."

On Tuesday, November 5th, 1974, Silkwood discovered she had been contaminated with plutonium again.

Sometimes Robert Rowen found the radiation levels so high that the radioactive film in his dosimeter was extremely overexposed. Then one day, he says, a superior asked him to falsify test records. After six years of trying to help PG&E's Northern California nuclear plant run safely, Rowen went to the AEC, charging PG&E with repeatedly violating federal rules on the handling of radioactive material.

Shortly thereafter, in the spring of 1970, Rowen was fired. But when he went job hunting, he discovered he was considered a dangerous radical. The local police even had a file accusing Rowen of living in a commune which read Eldridge Cleaver and advocated revolutionary violence. The police chief said he had received this information, unsolicited, from a PG&E security official. (The official admits talking to the police about Rowen but denies making any accusations.)

A state labor referee looked into Rowen's firing and found "the principal cause was his extreme safety consciousness." The AEC investigated PG&E, corroborated some of Rowen's charges and scolded the company for "discouraging" at least one employee from talking to the AEC about safety at the plant.

Rowen, a former Pathfinder in the Marine Corps, has filed a huge damage suit against PG&E and finally landed a job as a high-school civics teacher and football coach near Eureka, California.

Minnesota, summoned by the OCAW International to conduct crash courses for Kerr-McGee's plutonium workers. Their credentials were impressive: Dr. Donald Geesaman, a top AEC scientist for 13 years, had crusaded for stiffer plutonium standards until he was fired; Dr. Dean Abrahamson was both a physicist and a physician.

The two professors were told that 73 workers had been internally contaminated by plutonium during the previous four years. (Dozens more workers had accidentally brushed plutonium or been sprinkled with it, but had washed it off their skin.) The 73 had been exposed to airborne plutonium; any inhaled into their lungs could not be washed out. The probability of cancer in such cases, Dr. Abrahamson warned, "is disturbingly high." Because it takes 10 or 15 years after exposure to detect cancer, no cases have yet been reported at Kerr-McGee. But those workers with internal contamination must live with the threat of cancer for years to come.

Karen Silkwood was one of those 73, and she was shocked by Abrahamson's news. She had assumed she would stay clear of cancer if she did not breathe in more plutonium than allowed under AEC guidelines. But Abrahamson was saying, "If you can measure plutonium in the air at all, it's too high." The AEC guidelines, he said, were meaningless.

Silkwood grew moody and restless, working nights and unable to sleep during the days. She got a prescription for some sleeping pills. And she began to hunt for another job.

But first, she vowed to Stephens, she was going to get proof that Kerr-McGee was sustaining its plutonium plant through false and perjurious records. She had already collected some evidence, she said, and was certain she could get more.

At one point Silkwood reported to Wodka that she had obtained photographs proving the welding on some

Rapidly, as if no time were left on the clock, Silkwood jammed the dime in its slot and dialed long distance. Washington. Steve Wodka. "Hello." An uncertain trickle started down her face. Her voice tottered. "Please come to Oklahoma," she said. "Something very weird is happening here."

Three times in the past three days Karen Silkwood had been contaminated with plutonium, and no one knew where it was coming from. A monitoring device had first discovered flecks of plutonium on her skin and clothing shortly after she reported for work November 5th. She had quickly stepped under a brisk shower. But the next day the monitor flashed on again. More plutonium on her skin. Another shower.

the plant, she figured, were living in the shadow of Armageddon. "I felt betrayed by Kerr-McGee. They built that plant without telling anyone—I guess they thought no one would find out."

A few short notices had appeared in the local papers in 1970 when Kerr-McGee first began hotfooting with plutonium—quotes of welcome for the plant from then governor Dewey Bartlett. But there was no mention of the menace in plutonium.

In the fall of 1973 Younghein had begun a one-woman campaign to shut the plant down. Angry workers simply wanted the company to improve training procedures and apply safety precautions rather than lock its doors. But they supplied inside scuttlebutt to Younghein and other environmentalists, hoping the outside pressure would prod Kerr-McGee to clean up its act. Younghein did her best, collecting 500 signatures on a petition for stricter federal controls and penciling two lengthy doomsday articles for the *Oklahoma Observer*, a maverick semiweekly un-intimidated by Kerr-McGee.

Meanwhile, Kerr-McGee was preoccupied with a breakwater federal court ruling in New Jersey that ordered all nuclear companies to submit statements describing the dangers of nuclear plants. Among other things, Kerr-McGee was required to show the AEC that neighbors of the plutonium plant understood the risks and were willing to live with them. Kerr-McGee balked; Executive Vice President George B. Parks argued in a letter to the AEC that such questions were not "proper subjects of inquiry in a [public] environmental study."

Then Kerr-McGee relented. In August 1974 the AEC received three letters, one each from the city councils of Guthrie and Crescent and one from the commissioners of Logan County, representing the citizenries closest to the plant. The letter from the Guthrie City Council reported that it had surveyed the populace and found that "in general, their reaction has shown no animosity and . . . that the presence of the Kerr-McGee facility is welcome due to its favorable benefit." The letter from the Crescent City Council said the same thing—exactly the same thing, word for word. So did the letter from the Logan County Commission. In the finest tradition of spoon-fed corporate blurb, all three letters were identical. Confronted later with this embarrassment, Guthrie City Manager R. E. Anderson mumbled, "The company did give us a letter to look at so we knew what they had in mind. I didn't realize we'd sent it off without changing a few words."

The same month that Kerr-McGee was trying to impress the AEC with letters in triplicate, Karen Silkwood and the other two Local 5-283 steering committee members were preparing a declaration of war against the company. New contract negotiations were due in a few months, and for the first time Local 5-283 was going to confront Kerr-McGee squarely on the issue of safety. The chronicle of accidents, safety abuses and other allegations was to be compiled into a formal list of grievances.

Silkwood helped interview workers in the dangerous production areas of the plant. Most were young, average age about 25, coming from nearby farms and small towns and, Silkwood learned, several had no idea plutonium could cause cancer.

They spun out a grim tale of corporate callousness: New employees often were sent directly into production with-

out safety training (one such worker had been badly contaminated and had quit the next day before receiving medical attention); production schedules sometimes forced workers to stay on the job even when the air wasn't safe to breathe—supervisors ordering them to wear respirators rather than hunting the source of contamination; and plutonium was sometimes stored in such casual containers as desk drawers.

With their grievances in hand, and with the quickening hopes of the union membership, Silkwood and her fellow committee members, Gerald Brewer and Jack Tice, flew to Washington D.C. for a meeting with the OCAW International. They arrived on September 26th and met Steve Wodka, an OCAW legislative assistant, a hard-

nosed, stiff-talking man given to curt skepticism and impatient waves of the hand. Though only 25, he is among the OCAW's best troubleshooters. Wodka and his boss, Tony Mazzocchi, had devoted much of the previous year to hassling do-nothing regulatory agencies and exposing health hazards in the asbestos industry, a crusade that had won them praise from Senator Walter Mondale on the floor of Congress.

Wodka and Mazzocchi pumped Silkwood and the others for details, then the next day marched them over to the only place in town that could put the clamps on Kerr-McGee—the AEC. The AEC copied it all down and promised an investigation.

But Wodka was already considering another investigation. Silkwood had confided to him that for months she had suspected that tests on the plutonium fuel rods destined for Richland, Washington, were being fudged. And, she said, she had recently heard about records being doctored, X-ray photos being black-penciled and other tests being manipulated. Kerr-McGee's plutonium plant might be defrauding the AEC, she had concluded, shipping inadequate or unsafe fuel rods to Richland.

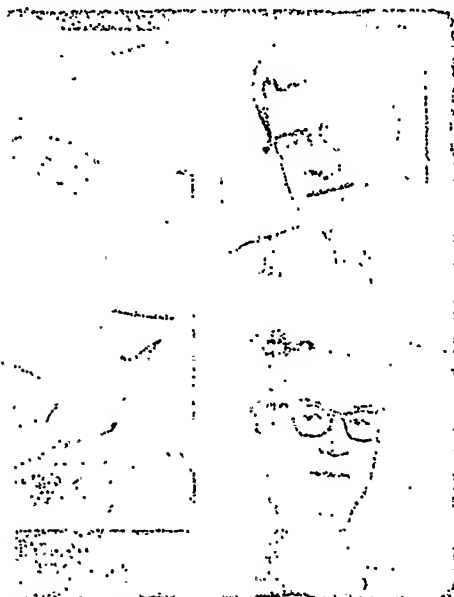
"Both Tony Mazzocchi and I felt this was a very serious situation," Wodka says. "But we felt it was premature to bring it to the attention of the AEC. We had to have proof before we could make any accusations. So we asked Karen to go back to the plant, to find out who was falsifying the records, who was ordering it and to document everything in specific detail."

Silkwood agreed to go undercover.

Back in Oklahoma she revealed her new role to Stephens. She stood in his living room, crouching over the radiator vent to shake off the autumn chill, and jabbed a delicate brown finger into the air: "We're really gonna get those motherfuckers this time."

Stephens, a short-haired, brainy lab analyst with an easy smile. When he first came to work three years before, Stephens had expected to earn his 40-year gold watch from Kerr-McGee. But he had grown disenchanted after the rash of accidents and now lived for weekends when he turned sports-car racer, a hotdog kid on the local auto-cross circuit.

The strike lasted ten weeks. Those picketers whose jobs had not been lost to scabs returned to work in January 1973, reluctantly signing a new contract that stripped away many of their previous rights, including certain protections against arbitrary firings and re-assignments. A few weeks later a plant employe was emptying a bag of plutonium wastes when a fire spontaneously



erupted, shooting radioactive dust into the air. Seven workers sucked in the junk. But Kerr-McGee supervisors waited a day before calling in a physician. Four days later the seven workers still had not been tested for contamination in their lungs.

Silkwood and Stephens shared in the outrage building in the plant. But they were now deeply in love, Stephens divorcing his wife of four years to live with Silkwood. They were enjoying the good times, tooling around in Stephens's tomato red Austin-Healy Sprite, country-rock blaring on the radio.

Then, in July 1974, Karen Silkwood became contaminated with plutonium.

Actor Jack Lemmon, serving as narrator, introduced the documentary: "One thing is certain. The nuclear power plants . . . have everybody connected just a trifle jumpy."

Entitled 'Powers that Be,' the television film was produced in 1971 by Don Widener, an Emmy winner then working for the NBC-owned station in Los Angeles. The film, a powerful critique of nuclear dangers, was shown once in Los Angeles but never repeated nationally.

NBC decided to let it die after Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E), the nation's second largest private power company and a heavy nuclear investor, raised a fuss on Capitol Hill about Widener's credibility. No charges were ever substantiated (although some are still in litigation). But, in an internal memo later subpoenaed in a lawsuit, a PG&E official confessed: "The fact that NBC is upset at our aggressive approach [with Congress] is just what we wanted."

Award-winner Widener, who is suing PG&E for libel, was let go by the network soon after the documentary and has found little television work since.

11

Oklahoma City still listens to Rosemary Clooney, votes Republican and plays host to all the cowboy conventions it can corral. Adolescents favor mail-order miniskirts and the Burt Reynolds look. A popular radio station provides "full-time Christian broadcasting." Okie country is not the kind of place that fathers worry their daughters will run off to.

But for Karen Silkwood, Oklahoma City was full of bright lights and good-time chances to catch up on what she missed as a teenager. She hung out at bars and rock concerts and learned how to get gently stoned. She was happy. Coming home one night she told Stephens: "I feel like I'm in love with the whole world."

But after several months she moved out, jealous for her freedom, unwilling to risk another marriage. She wanted her own place and, after a money-poor marriage, indulged in a color TV, a \$600 stereo, a Suzuki cycle and a Honda Civic Hatchback. Silkwood and Stephens remained friends and part-time lovers, but her career was her first love. She retreated from the night scene to work overtime. And she got involved in the union, OCAW Local 5-283.

Silkwood looked to the union as the only outlet for her growing frustration with management. When suddenly exposed to a swirl of airborne plutonium in July 1974, she was not wearing a respirator. For over a year she had been bugging the company to buy a special respirator to fit over her tiny, narrow face; it hadn't arrived.

When union elections came up the next month, Silkwood ran and won one of the three seats on the Local 5-283 steering committee. Fellow workers knew her as the spunky chick who talked back to her bosses. "Goddamnit, I am right and you are wrong," she once raged at a supervisor. "If you want to tell me what to do, you oughta learn how to do the job right."

Despite growing anticompany jabber at the plant, most workers did not want a fight. Many simply quit; the annual turnover rate among the 115 hourly workers, according to the union, hovered around 60%. Some complained of being harassed out of their jobs; three workers who griped to AEC officials about safety conditions early in 1974 were reportedly tracked down and transferred to "shit details" in the chilly warehouse.

Other plutonium workers took their feelings outside the plant, anonymously phoning tips to environmental groups like the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth. Several calls also went to Ilene Younghein, an Oklahoma City housewife, mother of two grown kids, a hefty woman with a wonderful roccoco laugh who had read about the dangers of plutonium in *Intellectual Digest* and had written to a local newspaper about it. "You can imagine how stunned I was when some workers called to tell me there was a plutonium plant under our very noses," she recalls. "It was a short drive upwind from my house and I hadn't known it. What would happen if there was a big explosion at the plant? We'd have dead people all over the place." In addition, Younghein learned, the plant had been built on a flood plain and in the center of a tornado alley, a situation that required stowing all plutonium in a vault whenever there was a flood or tornado alert. And there was no guarantee the vault would not crack. All 900,000 people within 50 miles of

lab animals, and some experts say that a softball-sized bag of plutonium, if properly dispersed, could visit cancer on every home on earth.

For years plutonium was used exclusively for bombs. The nonmilitary inventory wasn't enough to fill a pair of size ten shoes. But at the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in Washington D.C., visionaries saw an incipient bonanza. So the AEC, encouraged by money and kind words from Capitol Hill, set out to make plutonium practical and profitable. A special nuclear reactor to breed plutonium, nicknamed the "fast-breeder," was built in Michigan. It proved a \$135-million flop. In 1972, after dozens of false starts, it was abandoned, a vast leprous hulk on the outskirts of Detroit. (Early last year the Soviet Union's only fast-breeder closed down after a serious explosion.)

The AEC was undeterred. It decided more tests were needed. Near Richland, Washington, construction was begun on a facility to test "fuel rods," the plutonium-filled tubes used in a fast-breeder. The Richland facility won't be ready for tests until 1978 and a new fast-breeder, scheduled for Tennessee, won't be finished until the Eighties. But for the past four years fuel rods have been trucked into Richland to await the tests.

Most of the fuel rods come from Kerr-McGee's prized plutonium plant 26 miles outside Oklahoma City. It was Kerr-McGee, on good terms with the AEC since Robert Kerr's congressional days, which was awarded a \$1.4-million AEC contract to process the plutonium into pellets and pour them into the fuel rods.

Kerr-McGee's plutonium plant, built next to one of its uranium plants (and within five miles of 92 gas and oil wells, two popular resort lakes and the churning Cimarron River), opened in 1970 shortly before 8583 fish turned belly-up in the river following a big ammonia spill at the facility. Raised against the flat harshness of rural Oklahoma, the barnlike plant is unimposing; only a chain-link fence and armed guards hint at the devil's brew within.

Kerr-McGee had assured the AEC it could deal safely and circumspectly with the plutonium. But the AEC, a government agency in the curious role of both promoting and policing the nuclear industry, soon received numerous reports of irregularities and accidents at the Kerr-McGee plant. In a situation that left no margin for error, things kept getting bungled.

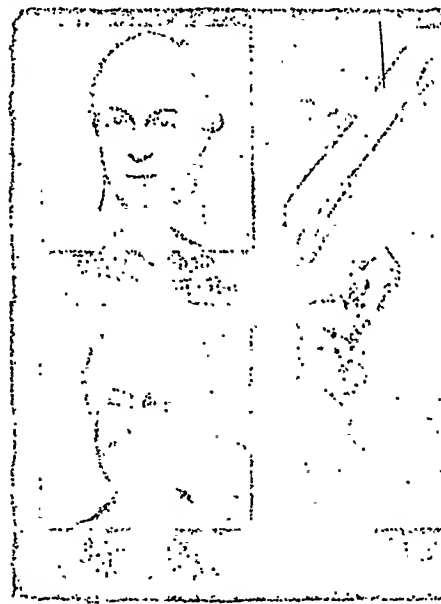
In October 1970, soon after the plant opened, two workers were contaminated when a radioactive storage container was left in the open for three days. Twenty-two more workers were exposed to plutonium in January 1971 when defective equipment allowed plutonium oxide to escape into the air. Less serious incidents were common. The protective "glove boxes" the workers used often had holes. Sometimes the "Super Tiger" and "Poly Panther" drums, specially designed to store the volatile liquid, unaccountably leaked. Improperly designed pipes once sent plutonium sloshing to wrong parts of the plant.

One day a worker bent to adjust a compressor unit; it exploded, ripping through his hand and tearing off the top of his face, spitting tissue over the ceiling. He died instantly. "When I got there," remembers a former lab technician, "they were washing the goo down the drain." Kerr-McGee, he feels, "didn't give a damn about the people

who worked there—it didn't care whether its safety program was effective or not."

In April 1972 two maintenance men repairing a pump at the plant were splashed with a rain of plutonium particles, which settled on their hands, faces, hair and clothes. At noon they left the plant for lunch in a nearby town, not discovering their contamination until they returned. They were scrubbed clean, along with their car. But Kerr-McGee neglected to check out the restaurant where the men had eaten.

Nor did Kerr-McGee inform the AEC of the incident, a clear violation of the federal nuclear code. The AEC was finally alerted to the affair a month



later, tipped off by an environmentalist who had learned of it from a plant worker. By then there was nothing to be done for the restaurant patrons, short of an all-out search for any who might have gulped down plutonium with their egg salad.

Beyond adding another bulge to the file of violations already logged against Kerr-McGee, the matter was forgotten.

When Karen Silkwood arrived at the Kerr-McGee plant in late summer 1972, she was just divorced and eager to begin a career as a nuclear laboratory technician. But after only three months testing the plutonium fuel rods, Silkwood was outside the chain-link fence, marching with an on-strike placard.

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW), representing the plutonium workers, was at loggerheads with Kerr-McGee. The company, a veteran of the wildcat oil rig, had managed to keep the unions out until 1966, three years after Senator Kerr's death. Now the OCAW was demanding a new contract with higher wages, safer conditions and better training. Kerr-McGee had replied with an offer worse than the old contract. Then, as soon as workers went on strike, the company rushed scabs onto the job, barely missing a beat in fuel-rod production.

Even Kerr-McGee officials later conceded, in a letter to the Sierra Club, that thrusting untrained strikebreakers into the plant led to more plutonium spills and leaks. ("Some scabs got only four hours of training when they should have gotten five days," fumed one striker.) Among the inexperienced substitutes hired during the strike was the plant's safety officer.

On the picket lines, meanwhile, 26-year-old Karen Silkwood was spending a lot of time with 22-year-old Drew

The Texas State Police had Robert Pomeroy under investigation. He was a suspected subversive. A dossier was being compiled.

Pomeroy had formed a 40-member citizens' group early in 1974 to protest the building of a nuclear plant near his home outside Dallas. An undercover agent who had been tailing him reported back that Pomeroy might be using the group as a front, "possibly for a Ralph Nader action."

What that meant was not clear. But the undercover agent gave the dossier to Continental Airlines, where Pomeroy had worked as a pilot for seven years. When Pomeroy, an ex-Marine with no police record and an impeccable civil image, found out about the dossier, he went to court, suing for libel, slander and a trampling of his civil rights. A state senator looked into the case and guessed that the Texas police had been put up to the job by the forces Pomeroy had opposed, the nuclear industry.

The police, while refusing to say who asked for the investigation, now claim they have destroyed their files on Pomeroy and all other nuclear critics.

Living with the memory of bombs over Japan and the threat of war with Russia, Americans in the late Forties and Fifties distrusted the malevolent caprice of nuclear power. So when the U.S. energy moguls decided to invest their future in nuclear reactors, they had to educate the public to the "peaceful" side of atom splitting. An industry forum crafted a 160-page guide for promoting nuclear energy; typical advertisements glamorized its development as "one of the most revolutionary events of the 20th century." General Electric handed eight million school children like Karen Silkwood a free comic book entitled "Inside the Atom." By the Sixties, the sales job seemed a success. Oil and coal would someday be replaced by the bold and bright promise of uranium.

It was uranium, an unpretentious metal buried mostly in isolated pockets under western deserts, that was going to fuel tomorrow's generators—and the oil companies were in on the ground floor. Kerr-McGee Corporation, for instance, which flies its K-M trademark topmast at hundreds of service stations in the Southwest, grabbed up all the uranium fields it could sink a shaft in. On a Navajo reservation near Shiprock, New Mexico, Kerr-McGee discovered a cache of uranium under the parched turf. The Navajos were paid as little as \$1.40 an hour to exhume the metal, hauling it out in wheelbarrows from the stifling, scratchy air below.

After 16 years of plunder, the Navajo mines were exhausted in 1969. Only then did the miners learn that uranium dust had infected many of them with a rare lung cancer that resists early diagnosis. By June of last year the cancer had killed 18 of the 109 Navajo miners, and 21 more were feared dying. But Kerr-McGee refused to take responsibility or pay medical expenses. "I couldn't possibly tell you what happened at some small mines on an Indian reservation," Kerr-McGee spokesman Bill Phillips told a Washington reporter. "We have uranium interests all over the world."

By the Seventies, Kerr-McGee had mined and milled tons of yellow-orange uranium and had acquired 800,000 acres of uranium leases and a corner on

the market. With assets approaching a billion dollars, it is the nation's largest uranium producer.

In downtown Oklahoma City, where Kerr-McGee's square-block headquarters towers 30 stories above the modest skyline, the Kerr-McGee name is as imposing as its building. The late Robert Kerr, the company's cofounder, claimed to have been born in a log cabin and to have worked his way through college selling magazines. As company president he prided himself on staying at cheap motels and eating baked beans in self-service cafeterias—while fighting to keep unions at bay and workers at minimum wage. As Oklahoma governor in the Forties he ran the state with the same frugality and didn't relax his tight fist until moving to the U.S. Senate in 1948. There Kerr became the most powerful man in the Senate, next to Lyndon Johnson; with Kerr's unflagging zeal, the energy industry won millions of dollars in tax subsidies. And nuclear research benefited from fat bags of public dollars, to the exclusion of solar and geothermal research, in which Kerr-McGee had no interest.

Dean McGee, Kerr's successor as company board chairman, holds office and influence in such diverse interests as banks, power companies and the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. McGee has yet to run for public office, but few doubt he could fit comfortably in the governor's chair. "People in Oklahoma look at Dean McGee the same way people in New York look at Nelson Rockefeller—they look up," one politician has observed. When Richard Nixon came to Oklahoma State University last spring in one of his last public appearances, he had to climb the podium with McGee, who received an honorary doctorate.

Recently McGee was named to a federal commission studying America's long-range energy needs, and he presumably will push for nuclear power. But McGee is already looking ahead to the day when nuclear reactors will no longer use uranium. Future reactors will feed on a far more potent fuel, plutonium.

Uranium, like fossil fuels, is limited in supply: in 40 or 50 years we will be able to run out. But plutonium—the love child of an ultimate alchemist—can reproduce itself. An industry brochure puts it like this: "Question: How many pounds of plutonium will you have left after you use three pounds in a nuclear reactor? Answer: Four pounds!"

Plutonium barely exists in nature; our present supply is entirely man-made. It was first discovered in the Forties among the waste products of fissioned uranium. Plutonium can take several forms—but it is usually a gray, soft metal, a slushy liquid nitrate, or a fluffy yellow-green oxide powder fine enough to be inhaled. In any form it is "fiercely toxic," according to one of its discoverers, Dr. Glenn Seaborg.

Plutonium is much more dangerous than uranium. It is incredibly combustible, readily convertible into nuclear weapons and, once let loose in the atmosphere, it stays deadly for a quarter-million years; it cannot be recycled or destroyed. Swallowing it in a quantity that can be seen would sear the digestive tract, killing quickly and painfully. Plutonium is also a carcinogen, but, fear a critic, few hundred people have ever handled it. Scientists disagree as to what amount can cause cancer. As little as a microgram of a gram has induced cancer in

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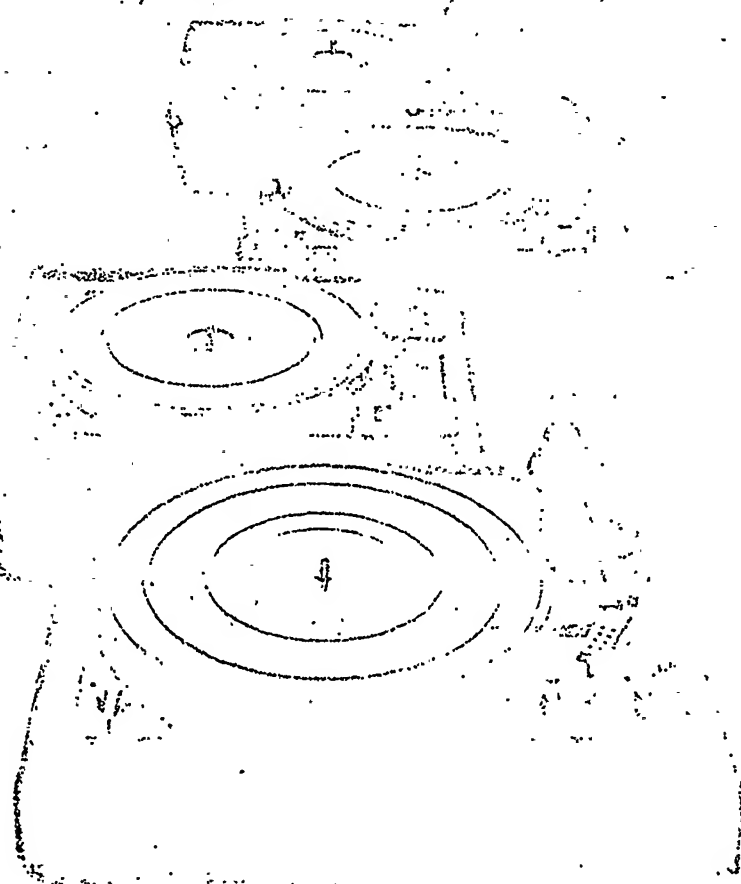
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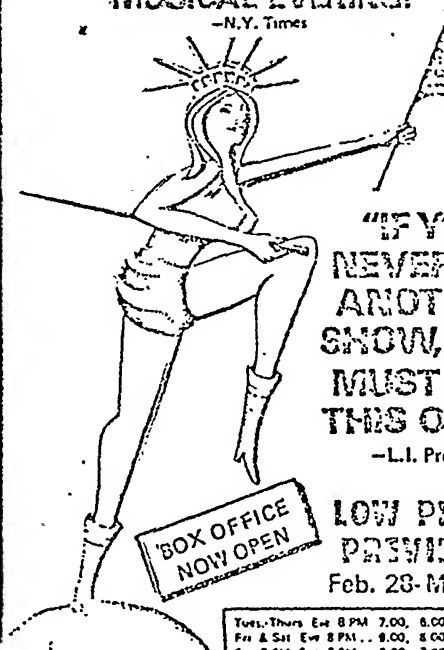
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LIEUTENANT

[Continued from 61]

Now, a month later, Christ-
mas was at hand. In the Silk-
wood house a make-believe
pine tree had been stuck in a
dark corner; the most conspic-
uous spot in the living room
was reserved for a photo col-
lage of their three daughters:
Linda, Rosemary and Karen.

"Karen was fixing to come
home." Her mother dabbed
softly at her eyes. "She want-
ed to get away. She was so
scared. I wish now I had made
her come home when she
called that day."

Her expression turned
steely. "We never did appre-
ciate Karen as much as we
should have. I don't think any-
one did. Even now they don't.
Look what she did. She gave
her life to save others."

The Silkwoods were still
trying to sort out what had
happened, to find answers to
ease their minds. They kept
pondering the central mystery
— how was Karen killed?
Had the Quaalude rendered
her in an "unconscious or hyp-
notic state," or had someone
stolen out of the darkness, a
mugger armed with power-
drive, to dead-end her into the
culvert? "I know that working
for that company is what
killed her," her father said.
"But I would still like to know
if it was an accident or if it
was murder."

The Silkwoods are now
considering filing a civil suit
against the company. It may
be one way, they have been
advised, to flush out some an-
swers. Kerr-McGee, accord-
ing to one source, is already
preparing for a suit.

So far the investigation is a
stalemate.

In January the Oklahoma
Highway Patrol reopened the
case for six days, reexamin-
ing the evidence and reaching
the same conclusion. Actual-
ly, it didn't reexamine all the
evidence. It couldn't.

Along Highway 74 the
Honda's tire tracks had been
sloughed away by a tractor-
grader—reportedly less than
24 hours after A.O. Pipkin
had inspected the scene in his
Day-Glo orange jumpsuit.
The stretch of highway had
then been repaved on one
side, making it difficult to tell
in which direction a sleepy
driver might drift.

The Honda was still avail-
able. But the State Highway
Patrol regarded it as unreli-
able evidence since it had been
out of its possession.

At the request of OCAW
International, however, three
other auto-crash experts have
now scrutinized the car. All
three agree with Pipkin that
the dents could not have been
caused by the concrete cul-
vert. Dr. E.L. Martin of Al-
buquerque, New Mexico, who
put the Honda bumper under
a microscope, said the bumper
dent resulted from "contact
between two metal surfaces."
It is highly probable, accord-

ing to these experts, that an-
other car slammed into the
Honda as Silkwood drove to-
ward the Holiday Inn North-
west.

Was the other driver a hired
killer? Or a loose drunk? No
investigator knows.

The three men who waited
for Silkwood that night think
someone was trying a scare
tactic that got out of hand.

If Silkwood did have apo-
distic proof of fraud, then sev-
eral people conceivably had
motives for intimidating her:
a plant supervisor afraid of
going to prison for falsifying
records; a company higher-up
who feared a fraud scandal
would mean multimillion-
dollar losses; a plant worker
who felt that Silkwood, in ef-
fect, was threatening his liveli-
hood; or an AEC official who
worried she would jeopardize
the entire fast-breeder pro-
gram.

Timesman David Burnham
has spent several weeks dog-
ging the Highway Patrol for
answers; he is now hopeful
that the Justice Department,
which has now entered the
case at the request of the
OCAW, will pursue a more
thorough investigation.

Drew Stephens, who now
works in a Volkswagen body-
shop, bought a holster, a box
of cartridges and a .38 revolver
shortly after the crash. He
suspected he was being fol-
lowed and that his phone was
tapped. He has stopped leav-
ing his front door unlocked.
In an 8"x 11" notebook, he
keeps a diary of every clue,
any skittish rumor that might
turn into a case cracker, then
turns these over to the OCAW
International. By spring, he
says, he will be packing his van
and heading cross-country.
"There's nothing left for me
here." His voice is muted.
"Not unless they find who
killed Karen."

At OCAW headquarters,
Steve Wodka has found it dif-
ficult to return to other
chores. The Silkwood case
keeps nagging him. There are
too many unanswered ques-
tions. For instance, how did
Silkwood become contaminat-
ed a week before her death?
For weeks afterwards Wodka
kept the results of her Los Al-
amos tests scribbled on an
OCAW blackboard, trying to
puzzle out the mystery. The
most logical explanation, he
decided, was that Silkwood
had been contaminated at the
plant and unknowingly car-
ried the plutonium home with
her. But then the AEC report-
ed that this would have been
virtually impossible, given her
duties at the plant during the
time immediately preceding
her contamination.

So now Wodka has come
reluctantly to believe she was
poisoned. "Someone must
have entered her apartment
and placed the plutonium in
her refrigerator. That's the
only way it could have gotten

the cheese and bologna.
We've heard from several
sources, including the AEC,
that Karen had been seen go-
ing through the files, looking
for records. Someone appar-
ently figured out what she was
up to. One sure way of pre-
venting her from gathering
any more evidence would
have been to poison her, may-
be scare her into leaving."

Wodka also cites another
AEC finding: Extra plutoni-
um apparently had been add-
ed to four of the urine samples
Silkwood gave to Kerr-Mc-
Gee for analysis in late Octo-
ber and early November. "I
think someone tampered with
these samples, hoping to get
her out of the plant or at least
confuse the issue."

Kerr-McGee officials have
advanced a different conspir-
acy theory, passed along in
off-the-record conversations
with local reporters. Kerr-Mc-
Gee suggests that Silkwood
contaminated herself to em-
barrass the company. Accord-
ing to this theory, Silkwood
smuggled a plutonium capsule
out of the plant, either by
swallowing it or slipping it up
her vagina or anus—all suici-
dal maneuvers. Cited as evi-
dence is the coincidence that
Silkwood was first contaminat-
ed November 5th, the day
before the company was to
begin new contract negotia-
tions with the OCAW. But,
even assuming that Silkwood
had become a frenzied zealot,
this theory does not explain
why she thought getting con-
taminated in her apartment
would embarrass the compa-
ny, or why the company would
get red faced over any con-
tamination after 73 cases in
four years.

Nonetheless, Oklahoma
City media has popularized
this theory. One state repre-
sentative, a liberal, shakes his
head. "I can't understand that
dame, shoving plutonium up
her ass like that." And some
townspeople have added their
own twist, announcing with a
wink that "I hear she was a
drug-crazy hippie who put this
plutonium junk in her mary
jew anna."

The OCAW International
has pledged not to give up un-
til the case is solved.

"Karen was a very unusual
person," Wodka says. "She
stood up to the company. She
was outspoken. She was very
brave, now that we look back
on it; in many ways she was a
lone voice. She was willing to
go ahead when other people
were afraid."

"She died for a cause,"
agrees Ilene Younghein. "She
will be remembered as a
martyr."

At NRC, the regulatory di-
vision of the new AEC, she
will be remembered, too. The
commission has begun a file
on her. It reads: "Silkwood,
Karen . . . Former employe,
Kerr-McGee."

mission (NRC). The change went into effect January 1st of this year.

Most ERDA officials are old AEC officials who are not likely to repudiate the AEC's longstanding commitment to nuclear power. But, charged with developing all varieties of energy, ERDA will take a new look at solar power, which the AEC virtually ignored. And it will reexamine the AEC's plans for 1000 nuclear reactors (including 150 fast-breeders) by the end of the century.

NRC officials, on the other hand, promise a new tenacity for stopping nuclear abuses. By the middle of February the NRC had ordered the temporary closing of 23 plants to look for cracks in the pipes of their emergency systems. If the NRC hangs tough, say environmentalists, the industry will either have to change radically—or there will be no industry at all.

The more Peter Faulkner found out, the more convinced he became that nuclear plants need a new set of rules to assure quality control. In the five plants where he'd worked as a field engineer he had seen the same mistakes and the same sloppiness repeated over and over.

So Faulkner took his proposal to his employer, Nuclear Services Corporation of California, a top consulting firm that deals with nuclear plants before and after they are built. It was turned down.

But Faulkner, an ex-captain in the Strategic Air Command, an author, a 20-year engineer and at Yale a member of the same secret society as Senator John Tunney, decided to take his proposal to Congress. On March 12th, 1974, Faulkner told a congressional committee it needed to get tough with the nuclear industry. Three weeks later he was fired.

Now Faulkner is forming a society of nuclear critics who have lost their jobs. Among those eligible for the society are several former AEC scientists. "The industry already has several organizations that promote it," Faulkner says. "People need a professional group telling what is really going on."

All her old clothes were under quarantine, suspected of plutonium contamination, so Karen Silkwood was buried in a new dress. No Kerr-McGee officials made the journey to Texas for the funeral, nor any AEC officials.

Afterwards Karen's parents returned to the green frame house where she grew up. An old high-school friend of Karen's came over to comfort the Silkwoods and spent the evening weeping in anger. Karen's youngest sister, a high-school junior, said that what happened to Karen had inspired her to become a career woman who would call her own shots. [Cont. on 62]

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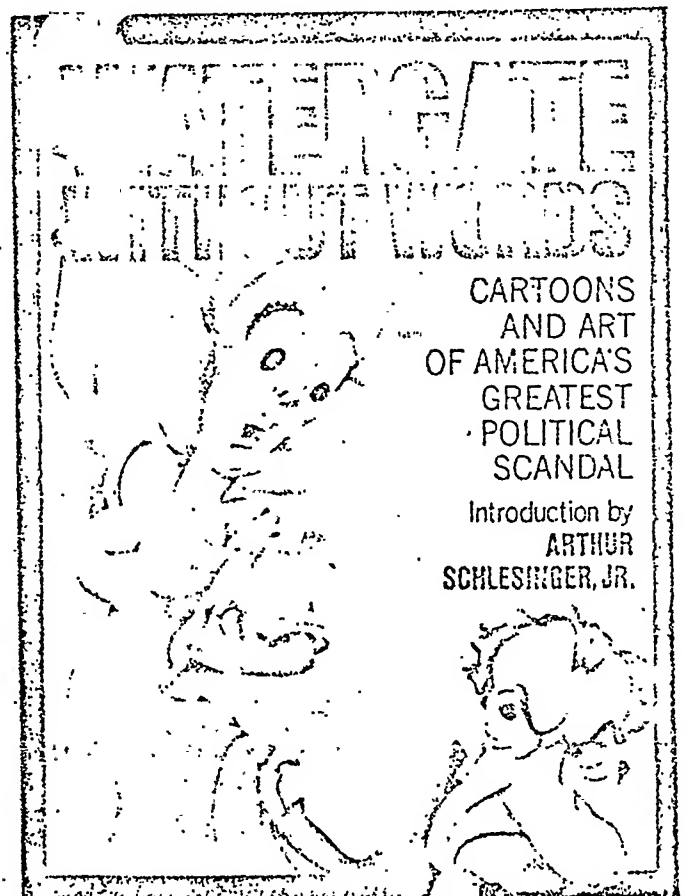
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[Cont. from 59] dents since the 1940s — including one leak that dribbled 115,000 gallons out of a tank unnoticed for 51 days.

Over the years the AEC had shrugged at multiple warnings that should have sounded sirens:

- A study by two AEC scientists in 1969 that predicted 32,000 more annual deaths from cancer if every American were exposed to the allowable radiation doses set by the AEC;

- An AEC laboratory test in 1970 in which the key emergency safety system for conventional nuclear reactors failed to work in six of six attempts;

- A 1974 AEC investigation that showed radiation levels in the lunchroom at a Tennessee nuclear plant were eight times too high;

- A *Science* magazine report revealing that a plant in Buffalo, New York, was recruiting beer-garden drones because conditions were too "hot" for regular employees;

- Accidents that spilled 1000 gallons of radioactive water into the Illinois River, leaked plutonium into Ohio's Erie Canal, sent radioactive dust out a chimney in a New York plant and increased the chances of cancer in hundreds of workers at dozens of plants;

- The 271 fires and 410 contamination cases at the AEC's only facility for mass production of plutonium parts used in atom bombs, eight miles upwind from Denver, Colorado. (In May 1969 this plant harbored the most expensive fire in industrial history: improperly stored cans of plutonium ignited and destroyed \$50 million of delicate equipment. Over a year later, General E.B. Giller, director of the AEC's division of military applications, admitted the fire had been a "near catastrophe." Had it burned through the roof—and it nearly did—"hundreds of square miles could [have been] involved in radiation exposure." The *Denver Post* has since reported that workers at the plant have a cancer rate seven times higher than the national average.)

In some cases the AEC has released data only after environmentalists filed lawsuits under the Freedom of Information Act.

But the nuclear coverup seems to be coming unglued. And there is a new crisis of confidence in the nuclear industry. In January the *New York Times* reported that because of recent criticism the industry is nearly doubling its funds for lobbying with politicians, reporters and labor officials.

There is even a question now whether nuclear power at its best can be efficient. During January 1974, the worst period of the energy crisis, 22 of the nation's 31 commercial nuclear reactors were closed down for all or part of the

month. Even when they are operating they provide less than 10% of the country's energy needs. By contrast, science writer Isaac Asimov estimates that solar cells, say in the Mojave Desert, could supply the present energy needs of the entire world.

More crucial is the issue of safety. Several nuclear plants have actually piled up more AEC violations than Kerr-McGee's. And the Environmental Protection Agency has recently joined the growing queue of leading scientists and authorities who contend the AEC has greatly underestimated nuclear risks. It is not simply the past record that frightens them; it is the potential for future disaster. No fail-safe systems have been devised to meet problems like these:

TRANSPORTATION. In 1970 a shipping mixup sent a drum of uranium to Tijuana, Mexico, an error the AEC labeled "Inadvertent export of special nuclear materials." Even if such mistakes aren't repeated, what about plutonium-loaded trucks or trains that crack up?

WASTE. Eventually the fast-breeder will produce tons of plutonium that must be disposed of. Because burying it is risky experts have suggested firing it into space. But what about rocket-pad explosions or "short shots" that fall back to earth?

IGNORANCE. Last fall sailors aboard Japan's first nuclear-powered ship tried to plug a radioactive leak with boiled rice and old socks.

TERRORISM. Only 4.4 pounds of plutonium is needed for a bomb capable of flattening downtown Peoria. What about such grandiose leaders as the shah of Iran, who fancies himself another Alexander the Great and who just bought five nuclear reactors from France? Or just some stray kook who gets his hands on plutonium?

THEFT. In 1972 the General Accounting Office ran a security check and found that one man, equipped with an adjustable pocket wrench and a strong arm, could break into a nuclear plant and obtain fissionable material within minutes. What about saboteurs who infiltrate a plant's working force? What kind of police state tactics will become necessary to protect our nuclear industry?

ACTS OF GOD. A Virginia nuclear plant was unknowingly built on a geological fault. Can nuclear plants survive earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural catastrophes?

No one knows for certain—including the AEC, which, nevertheless, has always been willing to risk finding out.

Congress, apparently fearing the AEC's dotting optimism, has now replaced it with two agencies: the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) and the Nuclear Regulatory Com-

asked questions like: "Have you ever talked to the media?" Although of questionable legality, the polygraphs were required of most plutonium workers as a "security precaution" before they could return to their jobs. A Kerr-McGee official described company strategy in a conversation with Jack Taylor, ace reporter for the *Daily Oklahoman*: "We're going to tool back up slowly and hire people who are trustworthy and are not involved [in the union]." As for undesirables—"You don't have to tell them [anything]. You can just say, 'You didn't clear security.'"

Along with Brewer, five other workers who snubbed or failed the polygraphs were handed pink slips. Jack Tice, the third union committeeman to make the trip to Washington, has been transferred to the most isolated part of the plant. "This action was taken in retaliation for union activities," the OCAW International has charged in a formal complaint to the National Labor Relations Board, "and to prevent [Tice] from discussing grievances or other union business with other employees." The OCAW also is challenging the six firings.

Among the six was Dusty Ellis, the cowgirl who shared the contaminated apartment with Silkwood. After her roommate's death Ellis initially cooperated with Kerr-McGee, refusing to talk to either the OCAW or the media. At one point she was seen, red-eyed and distraught, being escorted by two company detectives away from the Edmond Broadway Motor Inn where she had been staying, compliments of Kerr-McGee. Then Ellis—without explanation—aired a suggestion that Silkwood may have been pilfering plutonium from the plant. Shortly thereafter Kerr-McGee reportedly offered Ellis \$1000 as payment for any claims she might have against the company.

But Ellis turned down the offer. She began worrying that she had been more seriously contaminated than she had been told; her gums bothered her and she had trouble sleeping. In late December she hired a lawyer and threatened to sue the company for copies of all her health records. Three weeks later she was fired. (Two weeks after that, in early February, Ellis told friends that twice someone had tried, and failed, to break into her new apartment.)

During the month between the plant shutdown and the firings, the AEC had published the results of its investigation. (According to a *Daily Oklahoman* story, Kerr-McGee officials received a copy of the report well ahead of its official release, apparently in violation of AEC rules.) Company officials, who had been refusing comment since Karen Silkwood's death except to say,

"We will let the AEC speak for us," pronounced themselves pleased with the findings.

On the question of falsified records the AEC did locate one former worker who admitted using a felt-tip pen to touch up photo negatives that measured the welding on plutonium fuel rods. The worker, however, said he acted only to make his job easier and not under orders from Kerr-McGee. Without Silkwood's documents, the AEC reported, it could find no other hard proof. But the OCAW questioned whether the AEC was really looking. According to the OCAW, the AEC lied when it claimed to have interviewed a worker who disputed Silkwood's allegations of fraud. This worker, the OCAW says, has given the union a sworn affidavit that the AEC never interviewed him—and that he believes quality controls are not adequate.

Whether Kerr-McGee's plutonium fuel rods are safe and adequate for use is still unknown; they have yet to be tested at the AEC facility in Richland.

On the question of plant safety, the AEC reported that 20 of the 39 grievances it examined were true or partially true: Plutonium had been stored in a desk drawer instead of a prescribed vault; in various incidents, employees had been forced to work in areas not tested for contamination or where leaks remained; in another, the company failed to report a serious leak that had forced it to close the plant in May 1974; generally, respirators had not been checked regularly for deficiencies; few workers had been properly trained.

Such disregard for safety, the AEC decided, merited no censure beyond adding these new citations to the trove already in the Kerr-McGee files. Kerr-McGee was free to resume its role in the AEC's fast-breeder program, a program that might have been seriously compromised had Kerr-McGee been forced to close up shop permanently.

Younghein and other environmentalists professed no surprise at the AEC's lack of action. The AEC had never summoned the courage to penalize Kerr-McGee in the past. The AEC had managed to levy only eight penalties during a 12-month period in 1973-74, even though its inspectors had found 3333 violations. In 1972 during a hearing on nuclear safety, the AEC had given its scientists written instructions to "never disagree with established policy." And at a nuclear waste dumping grounds in Washington, the AEC has been in charge while half a million gallons of "hot" effluent, enough to fill four railroad cars, have been spilled onto the ground in numerous acci- [Cont. on 61]

159-4200

SILKWOOD

[Continued from 46]

"If the public knew what the facts are and if they had to choose between nuclear reactors and candles, they would choose candles."

—Ralph Nader

"When we think of having several thousand reactors as we are talking about having, [we could] have a serious accident once every three years, losing a city for example."

—Dr. John Gofman,
former AEC associate
lab director

"In the nuclear industry... no acts of God can be permitted."

—Dr. Hannes Alfven,
Nobel laureate
in physics

"In spite of soothing reassurances the AEC gives to the uninformed, misled public, unresolved questions about nuclear power safety are so grave that the U.S. should consider a complete halt to nuclear power plant construction while we see if these serious questions can be resolved."

—Carl H. Hoevar,
former AEC
safety expert

On December 20th, five weeks after Karen Silkwood's death, Kerr-McGee temporarily closed its plutonium plant. These were trying days for the company. Supporters of Kerr-McGee found it necessary to print ads reminding Oklahomans that Dun & Bradstreet had recently named it among the five best-managed corporations in the country. But headlines kept popping up all over, thanks to the *New York Times* wire service, telling of a mysterious death, falsified records and ill-trained workers sent in to handle one of the world's most dangerous poisons.

Nuclear proponents were worried, especially those of the nuclear elite like Dean McGee, who had been helping babysit plans for a multibillion-dollar "nuclear park" near flag-waving Muskogee in northeastern Oklahoma — it would be a carnie midway of over 20 facilities, the boldest assortment of nuclear props ever assembled. Even Muskogee's proud-to-be-Okies were beginning to flinch. "The bad publicity," complained Senator Henry Bellmon, a big McGee booster, "is making it more difficult to get what we want in the Muskogee area."

But the controversy around Kerr-McGee would not quit. Hints of strange goings-on salted the news. Robert G. Bathe, a plutonium worker, reported to police that a motorist had "harassed" him as he drove home from the plant a few nights after Silkwood's death; when Bathe's statement leaked to the press, he and the police suddenly refused to discuss the incident. Shortly afterwards, however, *Times*man David Burnham reported that

security at the plant was so atrocious that 60 pounds of plutonium — enough for five Nagasaki bombs — were unaccounted for and possibly missing, an allegation Kerr-McGee heatedly denied.

The most prickly burr in the wind, though, was the AEC investigation, which promised a full report on Kerr-McGee.

On December 17th, at the height of the AEC investigation, Kerr-McGee was forced to announce that five more employees had been contaminated at its plutonium plant. The company claimed it had evidence the accidents were contrived, a modest slander suggesting that workers sniffed poison to embarrass their bosses. Though Kerr-McGee said it had given its evidence to the FBI, the FBI denied receiving it. Nonetheless, three days later, Kerr-McGee handed out lay-off slips, announcing the plant would not reopen until the payroll was checked for security.

Closing the plant five days before Christmas effectively reminded the workers how close they were, in hard times, to standing in line for unemployment checks; some feared talking to AEC investigators might further jeopardize their jobs. (Earlier in December, rather than risk losing their jobs to a gang of strikebreakers, the workers of Local 5-283 had ratified a new contract that again fell far short of their demands.)

Predictably, the plant shutdown ruptured the tentative alliance between the plutonium workers and local environmentalists. To Ilene Younghein, the shutdown was a first step to victory; to Frank Murch, a middle-aged man with seven years invested in Kerr-McGee, it was a slap in the pocketbook: "You're damn right I'm bitter about this. I'm bitter at the environmentalists. It's a hell of a thing, putting this many people out of work." Some took to blaming the dead — one worker who earlier had talked about honoring Karen Silkwood with a special grave marker now spat at the mention of her name.

"Attitudes changed," says Gerald Brewer. "People started to blame Karen for getting thrown out of work right before the holidays." Brewer was one of the two union committee members who accompanied Silkwood to Washington in September. He had worked at the plant three years.

In early January, after plutonium production resumed, Brewer was demoted from his job and transferred to an isolated warehouse. Two weeks later he was fired. There was no official explanation; a company spokesman was still denying the firing five days later.

Brewer's apparent sin, besides his role in compiling the grievances, was his refusal to submit to a polygraph test that

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him to pick up Wodka and Burnham at the airport and to expect her at the motor hotel about 8 p.m. She sounded normal, Stephens remembers, perhaps a bit excited about having an audience with the *New York Times*. At 7:15 p.m. Silkwood left the Hub Cafe and headed for Highway 74 and the Holiday Inn Northwest. A fellow union member would later swear in an affidavit that Silkwood, minutes before she left the restaurant, was carrying a manila folder an inch thick with papers. The folder, Silkwood told the union member, contained proof that quality-control records were being falsified.

Thirty miles away, Wodka, Burnham and Stephens waited for that proof until 8:45. Then they picked up the phone; but for some reason the Holiday Inn lines were out of order, and another hour passed before the three could get through.

Meanwhile, at 8:05 p.m., a truck driver, sitting high up in his cab and rolling along the two-lane highway, spotted the white Honda, almost hidden in the muddy culvert. Silkwood had traveled about seven miles from the Hub Cafe, a ten-minute drive.

By the time Stephens, Wodka and Burnham learned the news from a local union member, the 1638-pound Civic Hatchback already had been towed to Ted Sebring's garage in Crescent. And Silkwood had been pronounced dead on arrival at the Guthrie Hospital, the victim of multiple and compound fractures.

The three men raced to the culvert, only a mile from the plutonium plant, and prowled about, stepping gingerly through the mud, which in Oklahoma is the color of dry blood. All they could find were shards of aluminum trim, the orange roadside reflectors that had been trampled by the bouncing car and Silkwood's uncashed paycheck.

Later they found the wreck locked up in Sebring's garage and peered at it through the window. They stopped at the home of union committeeman Jack Tice, one of the last to see Silkwood alive; Stephens called Silkwood's parents. Then they returned to the culvert, searching for an explanation in the tire tracks and the scraps of metal.

The explanation the State Highway Patrol offered was that Karen Silkwood, exhausted after driving 600 miles from Los Alamos to Oklahoma City, had fallen asleep and drifted off the road to an accidental death. Almost immediately the police had to alter their official version when they were told Silkwood had flown from Los Alamos and had gotten a full night's sleep only 12 hours before the crash.

The second official version was somewhat more convincing. Sometime during the afternoon of November 13th Silkwood had gulped down at least one of the pasty white Quaaludes from the vial in her coat pocket. Oklahoma City's chief forensic toxicologist, Richard W. Prouty, discovered .35 milligrams of methaqualone in her bloodstream, conceivably enough to lull her to sleep on the highway.

But that was not sufficient for Steve Wodka.

Silkwood had swallowed several Quaaludes in the past week without nodding out. Why would she fall into a trance on her way to an extremely crucial meeting? And the proof of fraud she was supposedly carrying had disappeared. Her personal effects, listed by the medical examiner, included an ID badge, an electronic security key (for the plant), two marijuana cigarettes, a Kotex pad, two used Kleen-

exes, a Bradley Mickey Mouse pocket watch, a small notebook, her clothes, \$7 in bills and \$1.69 in change. But there was no manila folder heavy with Kerr-McGee documents.

Trooper Rick Fagan, however, had mentioned finding dozens of loose papers blowing about the accident scene when he first arrived. Fagan had plucked up the papers, he told his superiors, and shoved them into the Honda. According to the highway patrol's information officer, Lieutenant Kenneth Vanhoy, the papers were in the Honda when Ted Sebring hauled the car away.

Presumably they were still there at 12:30 a.m.—five hours after the accident—when Sebring unlocked his garage for a group of Kerr-McGee and AEC representatives who said they wanted to check out Silkwood's car for plutonium contamination.

But by the next afternoon when Stephens, Wodka and Burnham claimed Silkwood's car from Sebring, no papers were inside.

Wodka called Tony Mazzocchi at OCAW International. Mazzocchi agreed: An outside expert was needed to investigate the crash.

Three days after Silkwood's death an auto-crash expert arrived in Oklahoma City from the Accident Reconstruction Lab of Dallas. A.O. Pipkin, an ex-cop, is a veteran of 2000 accidents and 300 court trials, a no-nonsense pro considered the best man around for piecing together an accident scenario.

Dressed in a Day-Glo orange jumpsuit, Pipkin examined the Honda and found two curious dents, one in the rear bumper, another in the rear fender. They were fresh; there was no road dirt in them. And they appeared to have been made by a car bumper.

At the scene Pipkin noted that the Honda had crossed over the yellow lines and hit the culvert on the left side of the highway. If Silkwood had nodded into a stupor, he reasoned, she would have drifted to the right. In the red clay, Pipkin found something else the police apparently disregarded: tire tracks indicating the car had been out of control before it left the highway.

Pipkin's disconcerting conclusion: Karen Silkwood's Honda had been hit from the rear by another vehicle.

Larry Bogart's last job was special assistant to the chairman of the board at Allied Chemical. But in 1966 he decided to take time off to oppose the construction of a nuclear plant near his home in Allendale, New Jersey. He has been fighting nuclear companies ever since; he is now coordinator of a 40-state coalition of antinuclear groups.

On a wintry evening in 1971 Bogart was driving his Volkswagen on the New Jersey Turnpike, heading for a meeting where he was scheduled to speak against nuclear power. Another car, he says, zoomed up alongside and forced him off the highway. His Volkswagen bounced off a guardrail, skidded wildly but did not roll over. He was shook up but unhurt.

On two other occasions, Bogart says, his car has been tampered with; once the accelerator rod had been sawed through. Visitors to his office, he says, run the risk of being photographed by lurking private eyes.

"Environmentalists tend to be naïve," Bogart says. "They think that if they prove nuclear power is dangerous it will automatically follow that change will come. They don't realize that big money is controlling the business."

[Continued on 58]

On the third day the mystery repeated itself—and a nasal smear indicated she also was contaminated internally.

How much plutonium, she wanted to know, could a person ingest before it burned out her insides?

Wodka tried to reassure her and promised to fly in. Silkwood hung up and sought out her old lover. "She was damn near incoherent," says Stephens. "She was crying and shaking like a leaf; she kept saying she was going to die."

Again she picked up the phone and called long distance. Minneapolis. Dr. Dean Abrahamson. She wanted medical advice from a physician. She told him that somehow, somewhere, she had gotten plutonium all over her, inside and out. "She knew what the medical implications were," recalls Dr. Abrahamson, "and she was worried."

A team of Kerr-McGee inspectors, armed with alpha counters, full-face respirators, special galoshes, taped up gloves and white coveralls, were meanwhile hunting the source of the plutonium. There had been no recent accident at the plant to account for her contamination. So, at Silkwood's request, they had trekked to her apartment. There the alpha counters commenced eerie gibberings. Plutonium, in small quantities, was everywhere. Outside on the lawn the inspectors filled a 55-gallon drum with alarm clocks, cosmetics, record albums, drapes, pots and pans, shampoo, bedsheets. Alongside they stacked chairs, bed, stove, refrigerator, television, items to be trucked to the Kerr-McGee plant for later burial in an AEC-approved site.

The plutonium trail turned hottest in the kitchen, inside the refrigerator. A package of bologna and a package of cheese were the two most contaminated items in the apartment. Apparently, the plutonium had been tracked around the apartment from the refrigerator. But no one could explain how two sandwich foods had become the source of contamination.

The apartment was sealed off and the AEC called in.

Silkwood, however, was more worried about the plutonium inside her than on the cheese and bologna. She kept popping the Quaaludes that had been prescribed a few weeks before. "The Quaaludes were just supposed to be taken for sleeping at nights," Stephens says. "But she was using them during the day, just to calm down. I'd never seen her so scared."

Wodka had jetted in from Washington and, after talking to Kerr-McGee and AEC officials, had helped arrange for Silkwood to fly to an AEC laboratory in New Mexico to be checked out for poisoning. On Sunday November 10th, five days after her first contamination, she boarded a Braniff airliner.

That same morning a front-page *New York Times* story reported that, according to the AEC's own internal documents, the AEC had "repeatedly sought to suppress studies by its own scientists that found nuclear reactors were more dangerous than officially acknowledged or that raised questions about reactor safety devices." One AEC study, kept confidential for seven years, predicted that a major nuclear accident could kill up to 45,000 persons and pollute an area the size of Pennsylvania. *Times* reporter David Burnham, who in 1970 interviewed Frank Serpico and broke open the New York police corruption scandal, had sifted through hundreds of memos and letters and learned the AEC had a ten-year record of blue-penciling alarming data, soft-soaping test failures and

glad-handing an industry that increasingly appeared not to know what it was doing.

The report gave scant comfort to Silkwood as she flew to Los Alamos, New Mexico, site of the world's first plutonium explosion during the A-bomb tests of World War II. With her were Stephens and Sherri "Dusty" Ellis, her roommate of the past few months, a blonde, rawboned, 21-year-old rodeo champ. Ellis also worked at the plant but had refused to get involved in Silkwood's efforts to unmask the company.

Now the three shared the same fears; all had been contaminated in the apartment.

For two days they underwent a "whole body count," a meticulous probing of skin, orifices, intestines and lungs, urinating at intervals into plastic bottles and defecating into Freezette box containers.

After the first day, the three had cause for relief. Dr. George Voelz, the health division leader, assured them they had suffered no immediate damage. Even Silkwood, by far the most infected, was told she was in no danger of dying from plutonium poisoning.

On Tuesday November 12th, Silkwood called her mother to announce the good news about the tests, but added, "I'm still a little scared. I still don't know how I got contaminated. I feel like someone's using me for a guinea pig."

"I told her to come home," her mother recalled. "And she said she would. She said she was ready for a vacation . . . she just had to do a couple things first."

After more body-prying tests at Los Alamos, the three travelers flew back to Oklahoma City, landing about 10:30 Tuesday night. Because the women's apartment had been gutted of furniture, they checked in at Stephens's bungalow, now a bachelor's pad papered with four-color profiles of racing cars clipped from hotrod magazines. Silkwood wandered over to her favorite radiator vent, squatting and rubbing to warm up, then went to bed early. She had a busy day ahead. She had told Wodka she would give him the evidence she was collecting as soon as she returned from Los Alamos, and Wodka had set up a meeting with her and David Burnham, the *Times* reporter, who was winging in from the East Coast. The meeting was scheduled for Wednesday night at the Holiday Inn Northwest in Oklahoma City.

Wednesday morning Silkwood drove to work. Contract negotiations between Local 5-283 and Kerr-McGee had begun the week before and, as a committeewoman, she was supposed to take part in the bargaining. She spent the morning in negotiations, arguing the union demands for better safety training and higher injury benefits. In the afternoon she met for several hours with AEC inspectors, who were trying to unravel the mystery of her contamination.

At 5:15 p.m. she drove to Crescent, about five miles from the plant, and stopped at the Hub Cafe for a supper meeting, sans supper, to discuss negotiations strategy with Local 5-283. Jack Tice, who headed the negotiating team, told the assembled union members that, as expected, Kerr-McGee was not budging off its hard line.

Silkwood excused herself about 6 p.m. to telephone Stephens, reminding

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"I told her to calm down, to forget about it," Stephens remembers.

Six days before Silkwood's Washington trip, Stephens had abruptly quit, riled by a sudden transfer. "When I first went to work there I wanted to be the world's greatest laboratory technician. Now I never wanted to see the place again.

"But Karen felt differently. She wanted to reform the place. She had tried to go through channels and she'd gotten very frustrated. But when she came back from Washington she was really excited. This was her chance to do something. She figured things were really going to change."

On October 10th, two of the nation's leading plutonium experts arrived in Oklahoma City from the University of

fuel rods was too weak. "They [company supervisors] are still passing bad welds no matter what the pictures look like," she said in a telephone conversation that Wodka taped. "I have a weld I would love for you to see, just how far they ground it down to relax the weld trying to get rid of the voids, the occlusions and the cracks." (Unsafe fuel rods, according to MIT physicist Dr. Henry Kendall, could lead to "an accident that would result in the release of huge amounts of radioactivity.")

Silkwood spent the weeks of October staying after hours, poring over files, recording every questionable procedure, building a dossier in a dog-eared manila folder. She did not know then that other employees had noticed her spying, and that the plant rumormongers were abuzz with suspicions about what she was up to.

"I have guilt feelings about those weeks," Stephens says. "I should have talked to her more, been with her more, helped her out. . . . But I just wanted to forget about the place."

On Tuesday, November 5th, 1974, Silkwood discovered she had been contaminated with plutonium again.

Sometimes Robert Rowen found the radiation levels so high that the radioactive film in his dosimeter was extremely overexposed. Then one day, he says, a superior asked him to falsify test records. After six years of trying to help PG&E's Northern California nuclear plant run safely, Rowen went to the AEC, charging PG&E with repeatedly violating federal rules on the handling of radioactive material.

Shortly thereafter, in the spring of 1970, Rowen was fired. But when he went job hunting, he discovered he was considered a dangerous radical. The local police even had a file accusing Rowen of living in a commune which read Eldridge Cleaver and advocated revolutionary violence. The police chief said he had received this information, unsolicited, from a PG&E security official. (The official admits talking to the police about Rowen but denies making any accusations.)

A state labor referee looked into Rowen's firing and found "the principal cause was his extreme safety consciousness." The AEC investigated PG&E, corroborated some of Rowen's charges and scolded the company for "discouraging" at least one employee from talking to the AEC about safety at the plant.

Rowen, a former Pathfinder in the Marine Corps, has filed a huge damage suit against PG&E and finally landed a job as a high-school civics teacher and football coach near Eureka, California.

Minnesota, summoned by the OCAW International to conduct crash courses for Kerr-McGee's plutonium workers. Their credentials were impressive: Dr. Donald Geesaman, a top AEC scientist for 13 years, had crusaded for stiffer plutonium standards until he was fired; Dr. Dean Abrahamson was both a physicist and a physician.

The two professors were told that 73 workers had been internally contaminated by plutonium during the previous four years. (Dozens more workers had accidentally brushed plutonium or been sprinkled with it, but had washed it off their skin.) The 73 had been exposed to airborne plutonium; any inhaled into their lungs could not be washed out. The probability of cancer in such cases, Dr. Abrahamson warned, "is disturbingly high." Because it takes 10 or 15 years after exposure to detect cancer, no cases have yet been reported at Kerr-McGee. But those workers with internal contamination must live with the threat of cancer for years to come.

Karen Silkwood was one of those 73, and she was shocked by Abrahamson's news. She had assumed she would stay clear of cancer if she did not breathe in more plutonium than allowed under AEC guidelines. But Abrahamson was saying, "If you can measure plutonium in the air at all, it's too high." The AEC guidelines, he said, were meaningless.

Silkwood grew moody and restless, working nights and unable to sleep during the days. She got a prescription for some sleeping pills. And she began to hunt for another job.

But first, she vowed to Stephens, she was going to get proof that Kerr-McGee was sustaining its plutonium plant through false and perjurious records. She had already collected some evidence, she said, and was certain she could get more.

At one point Silkwood reported to Wodka that she had obtained photographs proving the welding on some

Rapidly, as if no time were left on the clock, Silkwood jammed the dime in its slot and dialed long distance. Washington. Steve Wodka. "Hello." An uncertain trickle started down her face. Her voice tottered. "Please come to Oklahoma," she said. "Something very weird is happening here."

Three times in the past three days Karen Silkwood had been contaminated with plutonium, and no one knew where it was coming from. A monitoring device had first discovered flecks of plutonium on her skin and clothing shortly after she reported for work November 5th. She had quickly stepped under a brisk shower. But the next day the monitor flashed on again. More plutonium on her skin. Another shower.

the plant, she figured, were living in the shadow of Armageddon. "I felt betrayed by Kerr-McGee. They built that plant without telling anyone—I guess they thought no one would find out."

A few short notices had appeared in the local papers in 1970 when Kerr-McGee first began hotfooting with plutonium—quotes of welcome for the plant from then governor Dewey Bartlett. But there was no mention of the menace in plutonium.

In the fall of 1973 Younghein had begun a one-woman campaign to shut the plant down. Angry workers simply wanted the company to improve training procedures and apply safety precautions rather than lock its doors. But they supplied inside scuttlebutt to Younghein and other environmentalists, hoping the outside pressure would prod Kerr-McGee to clean up its act. Younghein did her best, collecting 500 signatures on a petition for stricter federal controls and penciling two lengthy doomsday articles for the *Oklahoma Observer*, a maverick semiweekly un-intimidated by Kerr-McGee.

Meanwhile, Kerr-McGee was preoccupied with a breakwater federal court ruling in New Jersey that ordered all nuclear companies to submit statements describing the dangers of nuclear plants. Among other things, Kerr-McGee was required to show the AEC that neighbors of the plutonium plant understood the risks and were willing to live with them. Kerr-McGee balked; Executive Vice President George B. Parks argued in a letter to the AEC that such questions were not "proper subjects of inquiry in a [public] environmental study."

Then Kerr-McGee relented. In August 1974 the AEC received three letters, one each from the city councils of Guthrie and Crescent and one from the commissioners of Logan County, representing the citizenries closest to the plant. The letter from the Guthrie City Council reported that it had surveyed the populace and found that "in general, their reaction has shown no animosity and . . . that the presence of the Kerr-McGee facility is welcome due to its favorable benefit." The letter from the Crescent City Council said the same thing—exactly the same thing, word for word. So did the letter from the Logan County Commission. In the finest tradition of spoon-fed corporate blurb, all three letters were identical. Confronted later with this embarrassment, Guthrie City Manager R. E. Anderson mumbled, "The company did give us a letter to look at so we knew what they had in mind. I didn't realize we'd sent it off without changing a few words."

The same month that Kerr-McGee was trying to impress the AEC with letters in triplicate, Karen Silkwood and the other two Local 5-283 steering committee members were preparing a declaration of war against the company. New contract negotiations were due in a few months, and for the first time Local 5-283 was going to confront Kerr-McGee squarely on the issue of safety. The chronicle of accidents, safety abuses and other allegations was to be compiled into a formal list of grievances.

Silkwood helped interview workers in the dangerous production areas of the plant. Most were young, average age about 25, coming from nearby farms and small towns and, Silkwood learned, several had no idea plutonium could cause cancer.

They spun out a grim tale of corporate callousness: New employees often were sent directly into production with-

out safety training (one such worker had been badly contaminated and had quit the next day before receiving medical attention); production schedules sometimes forced workers to stay on the job even when the air wasn't safe to breathe—supervisors ordering them to wear respirators rather than hunting the source of contamination; and plutonium was sometimes stored in such casual containers as desk drawers.

With their grievances in hand, and with the quickening hopes of the union membership, Silkwood and her fellow committee members, Gerald Brewer and Jack Tice, flew to Washington D.C. for a meeting with the OCAW International. They arrived on September 26th and met Steve Wodka, an OCAW legislative assistant, a hard-

nosed, stiff-talking man given to curt skepticism and impatient waves of the hand. Though only 25, he is among the OCAW's best troubleshooters. Wodka and his boss, Tony Mazzocchi, had devoted much of the previous year to hassling do-nothing regulatory agencies and exposing health hazards in the asbestos industry, a crusade that had won them praise from Senator Walter Mondale on the floor of Congress.

Wodka and Mazzocchi pumped Silkwood and the others for details, then the next day marched them over to the only place in town that could put the clamps on Kerr-McGee—the AEC. The AEC copied it all down and promised an investigation.

But Wodka was already considering another investigation. Silkwood had confided to him that for months she had suspected that tests on the plutonium fuel rods destined for Richland, Washington, were being fudged. And, she said, she had recently heard about records being doctored, X-ray photos being black-penciled and other tests being manipulated. Kerr-McGee's plutonium plant might be defrauding the AEC, she had concluded, shipping inadequate or unsafe fuel rods to Richland.

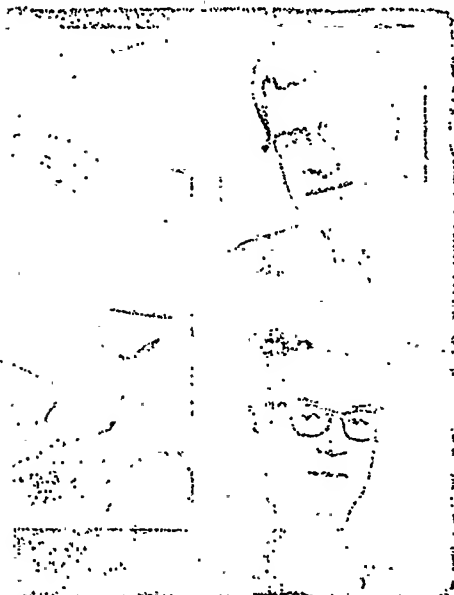
"Both Tony Mazzocchi and I felt this was a very serious situation," Wodka says. "But we felt it was premature to bring it to the attention of the AEC. We had to have proof before we could make any accusations. So we asked Karen to go back to the plant, to find out who was falsifying the records, who was ordering it and to document everything in specific detail."

Silkwood agreed to go undercover.

Back in Oklahoma she revealed her new role to Stephens. She stood in his living room, crouching over the radiator vent to shake off the autumn chill, and jabbed a delicate brown finger into the air: "We're really gonna get those motherfuckers this time." 157-4005-27

Stephens, a short-haired, brainy lab analyst with an easy smile. When he first came to work three years before, Stephens had expected to earn his 40-year gold watch from Kerr-McGee. But he had grown disenchanted after the rash of accidents and now lived for weekends when he turned sports-car racer, a hotdog kid on the local auto-cross circuit.

The strike lasted ten weeks. Those picketers whose jobs had not been lost to scabs returned to work in January 1973, reluctantly signing a new contract that stripped away many of their previous rights, including certain protections against arbitrary firings and re-assignments. A few weeks later a plant employee was emptying a bag of plutonium wastes when a fire spontaneously



erupted, shooting radioactive dust into the air. Seven workers sucked in the junk. But Kerr-McGee supervisors waited a day before calling in a physician. Four days later the seven workers still had not been tested for contamination in their lungs.

Silkwood and Stephens shared in the outrage building in the plant. But they were now deeply in love, Stephens divorcing his wife of four years to live with Silkwood. They were enjoying the good times, tooling around in Stephens's tomato red Austin-Healy Sprite, country-rock blaring on the radio.

Then, in July 1974, Karen Silkwood became contaminated with plutonium.

Actor Jack Lemmon, serving as narrator, introduced the documentary: "One thing is certain. The nuclear power plants . . . have everybody connected just a trifle jumpy."

Entitled 'Powers that Be,' the television film was produced in 1971 by Don Widener, an Emmy winner then working for the NBC-owned station in Los Angeles. The film, a powerful critique of nuclear dangers, was shown once in Los Angeles but never repeated nationally.

NBC decided to let it die after Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E), the nation's second largest private power company and a heavy nuclear investor, raised a fuss on Capitol Hill about Widener's credibility. No charges were ever substantiated (although some are still in litigation). But, in an internal memo later subpoenaed in a lawsuit, a PG&E official confided: "The fact that NBC is upset at our aggressive approach [with Congress] is just what we wanted."

Award-winner Widener, who is suing PG&E for libel, was let go by the network soon after the documentary and has found little television work since.

11

Oklahoma City still listens to Rosemary Clooney, votes Republican and plays host to all the cowboy conventions it can corral. Adolescents favor mail-order miniskirts and the Burt Reynolds look. A popular radio station provides "full-time Christian broadcasting." Okie country is not the kind of place that fathers worry their daughters will run off to.

But for Karen Silkwood, Oklahoma City was full of bright lights and good-time chances to catch up on what she missed as a teenager. She hung out at bars and rock concerts and learned how to get gently stoned. She was happy. Coming home one night she told Stephens: "I feel like I'm in love with the whole world."

But after several months she moved out, jealous for her freedom, unwilling to risk another marriage. She wanted her own place and, after a money-poor marriage, indulged in a color TV, a \$600 stereo, a Suzuki cycle and a Honda Civic Hatchback. Silkwood and Stephens remained friends and part-time lovers, but her career was her first love. She retreated from the night scene to work overtime. And she got involved in the union, OCAW Local 5-283.

Silkwood looked to the union as the only outlet for her growing frustration with management. When suddenly exposed to a swirl of airborne plutonium in July 1974, she was not wearing a respirator. For over a year she had been bugging the company to buy a special respirator to fit over her tiny, narrow face; it hadn't arrived.

When union elections came up the next month, Silkwood ran and won one of the three seats on the Local 5-283 steering committee. Fellow workers knew her as the spunky chick who talked back to her bosses. "God damn it, I am right and you are wrong," she once raged at a supervisor. "If you want to tell me what to do, you oughta learn how to do the job right."

Despite growing anticcompany jabber at the plant, most workers did not want a fight. Many simply quit; the annual turnover rate among the 115 hourly workers, according to the union, hovered around 60%. Some complained of being harassed out of their jobs; three workers who griped to AEC officials about safety conditions early in 1974 were reportedly tracked down and transferred to "shit details" in the chilly warehouse.

Other plutonium workers took their feelings outside the plant, anonymously phoning tips to environmental groups like the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth. Several calls also went to Ilene Younghein, an Oklahoma City housewife, mother of two grown kids, a hefty woman with a wonderful rococo laugh who had read about the dangers of plutonium in *Intellectual Digest* and had written to a local newspaper about it. "You can imagine how stunned I was when some workers called to tell me there was a plutonium plant under our very noses," she recalls. "It was a short drive upwind from my house and I hadn't known it. What would happen if there was a big explosion at the plant? We'd have dead people all over the place." In addition, Younghein learned, the plant had been built on a flood plain and in the center of a tornado alley, a situation that required stowing all plutonium in a vault whenever there was a flood or tornado alert. And there was no guarantee the vault would not crack. All 900,000 people within 50 miles of

lab animals and some experts say that a softball-sized bag of plutonium, if properly dispersed, could visit cancer on every home on earth.

For years plutonium was used exclusively for bombs. The nonmilitary inventory wasn't enough to fill a pair of size ten shoes. But at the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in Washington D.C., visionaries saw an incipient bonanza. So the AEC, encouraged by money and kind words from Capitol Hill, set out to make plutonium practical and profitable. A special nuclear reactor to breed plutonium, nicknamed the "fast-breeder," was built in Michigan. It proved a \$135-million flop. In 1972, after dozens of false starts, it was abandoned, a vast leprous hulk on the outskirts of Detroit. (Early last year the Soviet Union's only fast-breeder closed down after a serious explosion.)

The AEC was undeterred. It decided more tests were needed. Near Richland, Washington, construction was begun on a facility to test "fuel rods," the plutonium-filled tubes used in a fast-breeder. The Richland facility won't be ready for tests until 1978 and a new fast-breeder, scheduled for Tennessee, won't be finished until the Eighties. But for the past four years fuel rods have been trucked into Richland to await the tests.

Most of the fuel rods come from Kerr-McGee's prized plutonium plant 26 miles outside Oklahoma City. It was Kerr-McGee, on good terms with the AEC since Robert Kerr's congressional days, which was awarded a \$1.4-million AEC contract to process the plutonium into pellets and pour them into the fuel rods.

Kerr-McGee's plutonium plant, built next to one of its uranium plants (and within five miles of 92 gas and oil wells, two popular resort lakes and the churning Cimarron River), opened in 1970 shortly before 8583 fish turned belly-up in the river following a big ammonia spill at the facility. Raised against the flat harshness of rural Oklahoma, the barnlike plant is unimposing; only a chain-link fence and armed guards hint at the devil's brew within.

Kerr-McGee had assured the AEC it could deal safely and circumspectly with the plutonium. But the AEC, a government agency in the curious role of both promoting and policing the nuclear industry, soon received numerous reports of irregularities and accidents at the Kerr-McGee plant. In a situation that left no margin for error, things kept getting bungled.

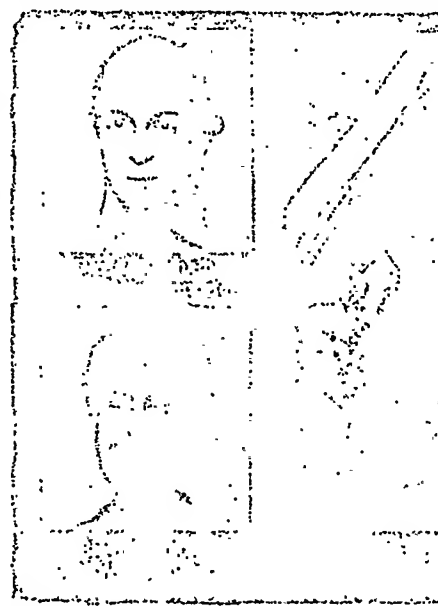
In October 1970, soon after the plant opened, two workers were contaminated when a radioactive storage container was left in the open for three days. Twenty-two more workers were exposed to plutonium in January 1971 when defective equipment allowed plutonium oxide to escape into the air. Less serious incidents were common. The protective "glove boxes" the workers used often had holes. Sometimes the "Super Tiger" and "Poly Panther" drums, specially designed to store the volatile liquid, unaccountably leaked. Improperly designed pipes once sent plutonium sloshing to wrong parts of the plant.

One day a worker bent to adjust a compressor unit; it exploded, ripping through his hand and tearing off the top of his face, spitting tissue over the ceiling. He died instantly. "When I got there," remembers a former lab technician, "they were washing the goo down the drain." Kerr-McGee, he feels, "didn't give a damn about the people

who worked there—it didn't care whether its safety program was effective or not."

In April 1972 two maintenance men repairing a pump at the plant were splashed with a rain of plutonium particles, which settled on their hands, faces, hair and clothes. At noon they left the plant for lunch in a nearby town, not discovering their contamination until they returned. They were scrubbed clean, along with their car. But Kerr-McGee neglected to check out the restaurant where the men had eaten.

Nor did Kerr-McGee inform the AEC of the incident, a clear violation of the federal nuclear code. The AEC was finally alerted to the affair a month



later, tipped off by an environmentalist who had learned of it from a plant worker. By then there was nothing to be done for the restaurant patrons, short of an all-out search for any who might have gulped down plutonium with their egg salad.

Beyond adding another bulge to the file of violations already logged against Kerr-McGee, the matter was forgotten.

When Karen Silkwood arrived at the Kerr-McGee plant in late summer 1972, she was just divorced and eager to begin a career as a nuclear laboratory technician. But after only three months testing the plutonium fuel rods, Silkwood was outside the chain-link fence, marching with an on-strike placard.

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW), representing the plutonium workers, was at loggerheads with Kerr-McGee. The company, a veteran of the wildcat oil rig, had managed to keep the unions out until 1966, three years after Senator Kerr's death. Now the OCAW was demanding a new contract with higher wages, safer conditions and better training. Kerr-McGee had replied with an offer worse than the old contract. Then, as soon as workers went on strike, the company rushed scabs onto the job, barely missing a beat in fuel-rod production.

Even Kerr-McGee officials later conceded, in a letter to the Sierra Club, that thrusting untrained strikebreakers into the plant led to more plutonium spills and leaks. ("Some scabs got only four hours of training when they should have gotten five days," fumed one striker.) Among the inexperienced substitutes hired during the strike was the plant's safety officer.

On the picket lines, meanwhile, 26-year-old Karen Silkwood was spending a lot of time with 22-year-old Drew

The Texas State Police had Robert Pomeroy under investigation. He was a suspected subversive. A dossier was being compiled.

Pomeroy had formed a 40-member citizens' group early in 1974 to protest the building of a nuclear plant near his home outside Dallas. An undercover agent who had been tailing him reported back that Pomeroy might be using the group as a front, "possibly for a Ralph Nader action."

What that meant was not clear. But the undercover agent gave the dossier to Continental Airlines, where Pomeroy had worked as a pilot for seven years. When Pomeroy, an ex-Marine with no police record and an impeccable civil image, found out about the dossier, he went to court, suing for libel, slander and a trampling of his civil rights. A state senator looked into the case and guessed that the Texas police had been put up to the job by the forces Pomeroy had opposed, the nuclear industry.

The police, while refusing to say who asked for the investigation, now claim they have destroyed their files on Pomeroy and all other nuclear critics.

Living with the memory of bombs over Japan and the threat of war with Russia, Americans in the late Forties and Fifties distrusted the malevolent caprice of nuclear power. So when the U.S. energy moguls decided to invest their future in nuclear reactors, they had to educate the public to the "peaceful" side of atom splitting. An industry forum crafted a 160-page guide for promoting nuclear energy; typical advertisements glamorized its development as "one of the most revolutionary events of the 20th century." General Electric handed eight million school children like Karen Silkwood a free comic book entitled "Inside the Atom." By the Sixties, the sales job seemed a success. Oil and coal would someday be replaced by the bold and bright promise of uranium.

It was uranium, an unpretentious metal buried mostly in isolated pockets under western deserts, that was going to fuel tomorrow's generators—and the oil companies were in on the ground floor. Kerr-McGee Corporation, for instance, which flies its K-M trademark totem at hundreds of service stations in the Southwest, grabbed up all the uranium fields it could sink a shaft in. On a Navajo reservation near Shiprock, New Mexico, Kerr-McGee discovered a cache of uranium under the parched turf. The Navajos were paid as little as \$1.50 an hour to exhume the metal, heeling it out in wheelbarrows from the stifling, scratchy air below.

After 16 years of plunder, the Navajo mines were exhausted in 1969. Only then did the miners learn that uranium dust had infected many of them with a rare lung cancer that resists early diagnosis. By June of last year the cancer had killed 18 of the 169 Navajo miners, and 21 more were feared dying. But Kerr-McGee refused to take responsibility or pay medical expenses. "I couldn't possibly tell you what happened at some small mines on an Indian reservation," Kerr-McGee spokesman Bill Phillips told a Washington reporter. "We have uranium interests all over the world."

By the Seventies, Kerr-McGee had mined and milled tons of yellow-cake uranium and had acquired 800,000 acres of uranium leases and a corner on

the market. With assets approaching a billion dollars, it is the nation's largest uranium producer.

In downtown Oklahoma City, where Kerr-McGee's square-block headquarters towers 30 stories above the modest skyline, the Kerr-McGee name is as imposing as its building. The late Robert Kerr, the company's cofounder, claimed to have been born in a log cabin and to have worked his way through college selling magazines. As company president he prided himself on staying at cheap motels and eating baked beans in self-service cafeterias—while fighting to keep unions at bay and workers at minimum wage. As Oklahoma governor in the Forties he ran the state with the same frugality and didn't relax his tight fist until moving to the U.S. Senate in 1948. There Kerr became the most powerful man in the Senate, next to Lyndon Johnson; with Kerr's unflagging zeal, the energy industry won millions of dollars in tax subsidies. And nuclear revenue reaped from fat bags of public dollars, to the exclusion of solar and geothermal research, in which Kerr-McGee had no interest.

Dean McGee, Kerr's successor as company board chairman, holds office and influence in such diverse interests as banks, power companies and the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. McGee has yet to run for public office, but few doubt he could fit comfortably in the governor's chair. "People in Oklahoma look at Dean McGee the same way people in New York look at Nelson Rockefeller—they look up," one local politician has observed. When Richard Nixon came to Oklahoma State University last spring in one of his last public appearances, he had to climb the podium with McGee, who received an honorary doctorate.

Recently McGee was named to a federal commission studying America's long-range energy needs, and he presumably will push for nuclear power. But McGee is already looking ahead to the day when nuclear reactors will no longer use uranium. Future reactors will feed on a far more potent fuel, plutonium.

Uranium, like fossil fuels, is limited in supply; in 40 or 50 years we will be able to run out. But plutonium—the love child of an ultimate alchemist—can reproduce itself. An industry brochure puts it like this: "Question—How many pounds of plutonium will you have left after you use three pounds in a nuclear reactor? Answer—Four pounds!"

Plutonium barely exists in nature; our present supply is entirely man-made. It was first discovered in the Forties among the waste products of fissioned uranium. Plutonium can take several forms—but it is usually a gray, soft metal, a slushy liquid metal, or a sluffy yellow-green oxide powder fine enough to be inhaled. In any form it is "fiercely toxic," according to one of its discoverers, Dr. Glenn Seaborg.

Plutonium is much more dangerous than uranium. It is incredibly combustible, readily convertible into nuclear weapons and, once let loose in the atmosphere, it stays deadly for a quarter-million years; it cannot be recaptured or destroyed. Swallowing it in a quantity that can be seen would seal the digestive tract, killing quickly and painfully. Plutonium is also an insidious killer but, because only a few hundred people have ever handled it, scientists disagree as to what amount can cause cancer. As little as a tenth of a gram has induced cancer in

159 4005

THE MURDER OF KAREN SILKWOOD'S TECHNICAL POWER AND HOW IT CHANGED THE COUNTRY

She was 29, a slight woman, dark hair pushing past slender shoulders, haunting beauty nurtured in a small-child look. She was alone that chilly autumn night, driving her new three-door Honda through long stretches of prairie. The Oklahoma fields lay flattened under the crude brushworks of the wind, the grass unable to snap back to attention. Every few miles a big-boned rabbit mangle had broken, littered the roadside. A couple years back she had fled out a room of angry letters when sheep ranchers staged rabbit roundups, making no doubt the furry army that had sprung up on the prairie. She was like that, poking her opinions where they weren't welcome.

In the early evening darkness of Wednesday, November 13th, 1974, Karen Silkwood was on an environmental mission of another sort. On the seat beside her lay a manila folder with apparent proof that records were being falsified at the plutonium plant where she worked. Waiting at a Holiday Inn 30 miles away were a union official and a *New York Times* reporter who had just flown from Washington D.C. to Oklahoma City to meet with her.

They waited nearly an hour. Then they picked up the phone.

Karen Silkwood's body had already been found in a small rivulet along Highway 74 where rabbits often come to drink. Her car had swerved left across the highway, skittered about 170 feet along an embankment, smashed head-on into a culvert wingwall, lurched through the air and caromed off another culvert wall, coming to rest in the muddy stream.

Her death was ruled an accident: the police decided she was asleep at the wheel. But the union official was not satisfied. The manila folder was missing. And a private investigator discovered two fresh dents in the rear of her car: telltale marks of a hit-and-run.

Even in the dead of winter it can be a steamy 80° in Nederland, Texas, a bottom-line speck on the map best known as the hometown of the late Howard Rubin, a freelance writer, was raised on a "farm to market" of Auburn, Michigan and was a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*.

Tex ("Hillbilly Heaven") Ritter. Nederland is tucked in the southeastern crook of the Longhorn State, a half-hour's drive from the Gulf of Mexico but within mosquito-flying distance of the bogs and bayous. It is a small town with a limited sense of local color. Its most exotic avenues are driveways paved with seashells from the Gulf. Lowing Herefords munch and ruminate in back yards until ready for the oven. A windmill-shaped museum pays tribute to turn-of-the-century Dutch ancestors.

But the most eye-watering landmarks of Nederland are the giant oil refineries obscuring the horizon, coughing out a gray, sinister fog. This corner of Texas produces 10% of the nation's oil supply; it is Texaco-Mobil-Gulf country, where there are seldom discouraging words about an energy crisis. When the wind is right, which is often, a thick, fetid odor settles over Nederland, clinging to food and clothes, gagging unwary strangers. The smell might explain why Tex Ritter skipped Nederland's golden anniversary shivaree or why young families leave good-paying jobs to go elsewhere. But the air also reeks of big money. As state Representative Billy Williamson remarked last year when someone suggested shutting down the stinking refineries: "I think we are all willing to have a little bit of crud in our lungs . . . I don't need some bunch of do-gooders telling me what's good to breathe."

Karen Silkwood never forget the dirty air and sweet stench. When her teachers talked of a new technology that would eliminate the stink and mess of oil, she was captivated. The clean purr of nuclear power: That was the hope of the future. On her own time Karen enrolled in a six-week course on radiation. In her senior year she was accepted into her high school's advanced chemistry class, and her father, the town's premier housepainter, dreamed of his daughter as a scientist. But when her mother, a gentle-faced housewife who is tonight as a bank clerk, discovered Karen was the only girl in her chemistry class, there was a confrontation. "I thought she should be in something like home economics, and I told the chemistry teacher I wanted her out," she says. "But he finally made me change my mind. He said she was a better student than the boys."

Karen was an intense, serious girl who slanned the local teenage hot-spots for library reading and volunteer work at a hospital. Her acquaintances remember only one irritating characteristic: She talked back to her teachers, correcting them with an uncanny firmness when they slipped up, say, on the atomic weight of tritium. "She was," says one old friend, "a very nice person who always wanted to be right about everything."

She graduated in 1964 with a college scholarship and best wishes from everyone. At nearby Lamar College Karen pursued her science interests, settling on a career as a laboratory analyst, perhaps in nuclear physics.

But before her sophomore year ended, she was whisked away from her studies by a good-looking guy with a promising future as a pipeline supervisor at Mobil Oil. It was seven years, three kids, one bankruptcy and a divorce later before she returned to her earlier ambitions. In August 1972 she left her husband and children, resumed her maiden name, and took a job away from the smokestacks of Texas as a laboratory technician for one of the nuclear sites, Kerr-McCree Corporation of Oklahoma.

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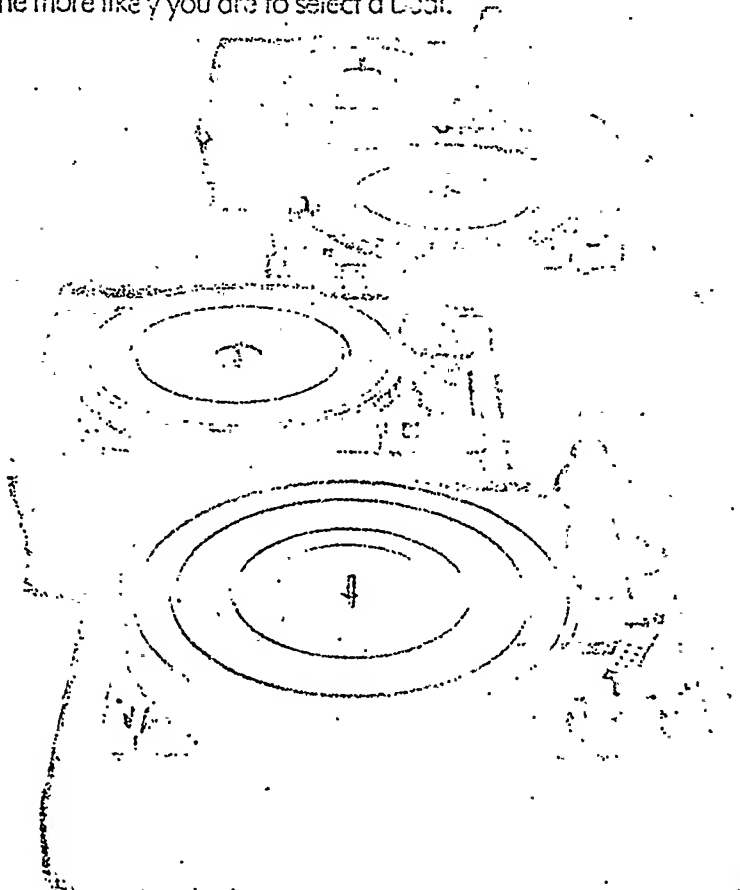
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From front to rear, multi-play models Dual 1229Q, \$259.95 Dual 1228, \$189.95 Dual 1226, \$159.95; Dual 1225, \$129.95. All less base and dust cover. Not shown, single play automatics: Dual 601, \$273; and the electronic direct-drive Dual 701, \$403. Both include base and dust cover.



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159-4005 - 27

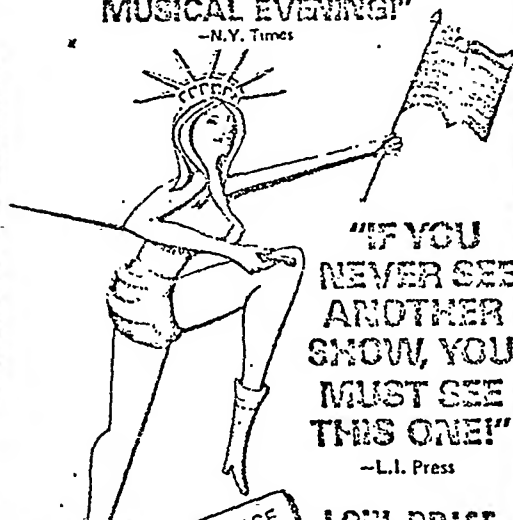
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LIEUTENANT

159-4005-27

F B I

Date: 3/17/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority)

TO DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)
FROM SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (P)
SUBJECT UNSUBS;
Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased)
LMRDA;OOJ
OO: Oklahoma City

Re Bureau telephone call to Oklahoma City, 3/13/75.

Enclosed herewith for the Bureau are six copies of LHM dated and captioned as above. Two copies of LHM being furnished USA, Oklahoma City.

Attached LHM sets forth results of interview with [redacted] who resides [redacted] of Kerr McGee Cimarron Facility. It would appear that the unknown reporter with whom [redacted] had contact with is likely identical with New York Times reporter [redacted]. It is noted that the [redacted] referred to in [redacted] interview is identical with [redacted] who was interviewed 1/9/75 in referenced captioned matter, results of which interview are set forth in Oklahoma City report by SA [redacted] dated 1/21/75.

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Oklahoma City has previously been in contact with USA [redacted] WDO, in reference to captioned case. [redacted] has just completed a lengthy trial at Oklahoma City in which he successfully prosecuted [redacted]. Inquiry with [redacted] office determined that he is out of town the week of 3/17 - 21/75 and will not return to work until 3/24/75. [redacted] has previously expressed a personal interest in regard to captioned case and requested he be kept informed.

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ENCLOSURE 30 159-4005-28
② - Bureau (Enc. - 6) 2cc ROM CRIM. DIV., by [redacted]
2 - Oklahoma City 3 MAR 20 1975
LJO:dah
(4) 1cc LABOR DESK, TICKLER
3-21-75

Approved: [Signature]
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

OC 159-45

LEAD:

OKLAHOMA CITY

AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA. Will recontact
USA, [REDACTED] and discuss prosecutive
aspects of captioned case.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125

March 17, 1975

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No. 159-45

Unknown Subjects;
Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased)
LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORT AND DISCLOSURE ACT
OF 1959; OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

Set forth below are the results of inter-
view with [REDACTED].

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This document contains neither
recommendations nor conclusions of
the FBI. It is the property of
the FBI and is loaned to your agency;
it and its contents are not to be
distributed outside your agency.

ENCLOSURE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 3/14/75

[redacted] Rural Route, Crescent, Oklahoma,
furnished the following information:

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[redacted] located at [redacted]
[redacted] of the Kerr McGee Cimarron
Facility (CF).

Some four or five weeks ago, CF employee started coming into the station. Many CF employees do business with him but he cannot recall having had this particular individual as a previous customer. He learned that this individual was a widow woman by the name of [redacted] who apparently lives somewhere between [redacted] and [redacted] Oklahoma. On her initial visit, [redacted] and he talked about the fatal car accident in which KAREN SILKWOOD, a CF employee died. He had no personal knowledge about this SILKWOOD accident but had read a lot about it in the newspaper and seen a lot about the accident on television. He also heard various CF employees who were customers of his talk about the accident. [redacted]

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[redacted]. The accident and the related publicity were the biggest thing to happen in the area in quite some time and were naturally the topic of much conversation.

As he said he had no personal knowledge of the SILKWOOD accident but the understanding that he did have of the accident led him to think that there were some rather peculiar aspects concerning the accident. As he recalls, he discussed his opinions concerning the peculiar aspects with [redacted] when she first appeared at the station. His opinions seemed to excite [redacted] and she came back several times thereafter ostensibly to buy gas but apparently to talk about the accident. Shortly after the accident had occurred, he recalls hearing some Kerr McGee employees commenting that a fellow by the name [redacted] who worked with KAREN, was the first person to discover the accident. As he understood the story, [redacted] was with KAREN either at

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Interviewed on 3/11/75 at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma File # Oklahoma City 159-45

by SA [redacted] Date 3/14/75

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CC 159-45

2

CF or at a Union meeting immediately prior to the accident. For some reason [] was going to take KAREN home but did not do so. [] was suppose to have followed along after KAREN to see her home safely and apparently came upon the accident just after it occurred. It is his understanding that [] did not actually witness the accident. This is what he thinks is so very peculiar as there would have been several places between the accident and Crescent where [] could have used the phone to report the accident without going clear back to Crescent. There is a residence ¼ mile south of where he is located with a phone. There is a public pay station located on a post out in front of the gas pumps at his station. Everyone in the entire country site is well acquainted with the location of this telephone and it is heavily used. The Kerr McGee plant is also just north of his station and they have phones there.

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Just which CF employee it was who related this story to him he cannot recall nor can he recall when he first heard the story. He cannot recall having discussed this story in any detail with anyone other than []. As he recalls, he was unaware of the fact that the accident had taken place until approximately two or three days after the accident had occurred and then he started reading about it in the newspaper and hearing people talk about it. He is aware that the interest in this accident has continued because there have been a lot of strange things going on in the area which appear to relate to the accident. Recently he saw helicopters and airplanes flying around for considerable periods of time. Apparently aerial photographs were being taken of the accident scene and the CF itself. He also understands that some television company was conducting a series of driving tests where the accident occurred.

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Earlier on March 11, 1975, something very strange occurred. A white male in his 40s, who was slightly balding, dressed in a blue work shirt and blue jeans appeared at his station and started asking him detailed questions about the SILKWOOD accident. This individual was driving a new Plymouth with 1975 Oklahoma plates ZR 8106. This individual

first asked him to put gas in the car. He has not had the occasion to service many new Plymouths and so he was not familiar with where the gas cap was on the car. The thing that first aroused his suspicion about this person was the fact that the driver himself did not know where gas went in the car. However, he later found out that this apparently was a rental car. This individual never did identify himself by name or display any kind of credentials or identification. The individual did indicate he was a reporter but did not say who he worked for. The reporter said he was from Washington, D.C. They were talking about the SILKWOOD wreck when all of a sudden the reporter asked what he knew about [redacted]. This made him very suspicious of the reporter because the only person with whom he recalled talking with about [redacted] was [redacted]. He did not tell the reporter hardly anything at all about [redacted] because at this point he became very suspicious of the reporter. He does not know for a fact that this person was really a reporter and for all he knows the reporter may have actually been some type of Communist.

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The reporter made some mention of the fact that some television company had made road tests at the SILKWOOD accident site. The reporter also took great notice of the fact that the Highway had been resurfaced in the vicinity of the accident after the accident occurred. The reporter indicated he thought this was most unusual.

He told the reporter that this was not at all unusual because Highway 74 about a year ago had been repaved from the Oklahoma - Logan County Line north to a point four miles south of the station. He told the reporter that this past fall an additional contract had been let to continue the paving project and the highway was repaved now to a point two miles north of the station. He considered his contact with the reporter so unusual that he felt he should report this contact to the FBI. He assumes that [redacted] in some way "put the reporter on him". As he has previously indicated, he does not really know anything about the accident and does not even know just who [redacted] is.

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OC 159-45

4

He still cannot recall who it was that first told him the story about [REDACTED] He does not know who the first person was on the scene of the SILKWOOD accident and does not know who reported the accident to the police. He does not recall anything which occurred on the evening of November 13, 1974, which would seem to relate to the SILKWOOD accident.

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OC 159-45

**UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased)**

In regard to the [] mentioned in above [] interview, this individual is more than likely identical with [] a former Kerr McGee Cimarron Facility employee who is a former committeeman of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW). Investigation has determined that [] was closely associated with Silkwood in regard to some of the allegations made by Silkwood against the Kerr McGee Corporation.

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Results of interview with [] conducted December 3, 1974, have been set forth in report previously submitted under above captioned report of SA [], December 13, 1974. It is noted that no information has been developed indicating that [] was on the scene of the Silkwood fatal accident, November 13, 1974, as believed by []. In regard to the [] mentioned in the [] interview, she had previously been interviewed in reference to this case on January 9, 1975, as reported in Oklahoma City report of [] January 21, 1975.

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. W. R. Wannall *WRW*

FROM : F. S. Putman, Jr. *FSP*

SUBJECT: KERR-MC GEE NUCLEAR CORPORATION,
CIMARRON FACILITY, CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA
INFORMATION CONCERNING

1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
1 - Mr. R. E. Gebhardt
(Attn:)
1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall
DATE: 3/13/75
1 - Mr. F. S. Putman
1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

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Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

SYNOPSIS:

Following are background of incidents which have occurred at captioned facility as well as an up-to-date summarization of ongoing investigations concerning same.

On 11/21/74, a Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA)-Obstruction of Justice (OOJ) investigation was instituted by our Oklahoma City Office upon receipt of a request dated 11/20/74, from the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), Criminal Division, Department of Justice. This request was based on an article appearing in the "New York Times" on 11/19/74, and a telegram received by the Attorney General (AG) from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) on the same date suggesting that the death of Karen G. Silkwood, who died in a one-car accident on 11/13/74, was caused by Silkwood's automobile being hit from behind by another vehicle causing it to run off the road. The Department advised that if these allegations were substantiated, a possible violation of Section 530, Title 29, U. S. Code (USC) (through the impairment of Silkwood's rights as a union member guaranteed by Section 411, Title 29, USC) and Section 1505, Title 18, USC (in that Silkwood was a witness in a pending investigation before the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)) would exist.

A thorough investigation was conducted in this matter and no information was developed indicating the death of Silkwood was other than accidental. An autopsy, which was performed on Silkwood, indicated she was under the influence of a drug (methaqualone) at the time of her death. The Chief Medical Examiner, Board of Medicolegal, Oklahoma City, advised this drug is a sleep inducing drug. The amount found in Silkwood's system subsequent to her death would indicate that she was under the influence of the drug at the time of her death and was drowsy or sleepy.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

CONTINUED - OVER

DATE 7-1-85 BY 9145-21-JC

#251-957

AJD:mjg
(6)

88 APR 1 1975

Deleted Copy Sent
by Letter Dated 5-10-76
Per FOIPA Request *Re K. Silkwood*

b6
b7C

117-2687-
117-2701-
117-2846

159-400-29

Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Wannall
Re: Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation,
Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma

The results of all investigation conducted relative to the LMRDA-OOJ violation have been furnished to the Management and Labor Section, Criminal Division, Department of Justice.

X
117-2698 On 12/17/74, Security Officer, Kerr-McGee Corporation (KMC), advised that it was discovered on 12/16/74, at the Cimarron Facility of KMC, that enriched uranium 235 fuel pellets had been scattered around plant grounds. Search recovered some 15 pellets, weighing 11 grams each which are considered to be Special Nuclear Material (SNM). Security Officer advised it was not known if pellets were scattered as a prank or for some malicious purpose and KMC had no suspects.

This information was furnished to AEC and AAG, Criminal Division under caption "Unsubs; Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr-McGee Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, December 16, 1974, Atomic Energy Act (AEA)."

On 12/18/74, AEC, Chicago, Illinois, telephonically advised the Oklahoma City Office that a representative would be in Oklahoma City area 12/18-20/74, investigating recent plutonium spills and contaminations at KMC and that other AEC representatives would investigate the scattering of uranium pellets at KMC 12/16/74.

On 1/21/75, Department advised that prior to requesting additional FBI investigation concerning this matter, it was desired to have results of any Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) (formerly AEC) investigation. Results of NRC investigation obtained and subsequently furnished to Department 1/27/75.

By letter dated 2/14/75, the AAG, Criminal Division, advised that a discussion was held with NRC which suggested that the scattering of these pellets be viewed in the context of the recent labor-management problems at KMC. It was noted that Title 42, USC, Section 2077 makes it an offense for one not authorized under license of the NRC to possess SNM and,

Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Wannall
Re: Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation,
Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma

accordingly, if it could be established that the person or persons who scattered the pellets had unauthorized possession at the time of the commission of this act, a violation could have occurred. It was requested that the FBI continue investigation with the view of identifying the individual or individuals responsible for this incident.

By airtel dated 2/26/75, Oklahoma City was advised to immediately institute investigation at KMC in an effort to identify unsub this matter and, further, that investigation should be closely coordinated with LMRDA investigation currently under way.

Results of the LMRDA investigation, Supra, in addition to normal dissemination were furnished to the Internal Security Section of the Department due to the possible AEA aspects of allegations and incidents at KMC.

X
By letter dated 2/21/75, AAG, Criminal Division
advised that the Department had reviewed NRC's investigation into the report that an employee, Karen G. Silkwood, was found to be contaminated with plutonium on 11/7/74. NRC's investigation disclosed that Silkwood was found to be contaminated with plutonium on several occasions in early November, 1974. Further, her apartment, her automobile, her roommate and a friend were also found to be contaminated with plutonium. NRC investigators were unable to determine how the contamination occurred; however, they concluded that the contamination probably did not result from an accident or incident within the plant. Based on this, the Department requested the Bureau to conduct an investigation to determine if one or more persons involved in this incident had, in fact, unauthorized possession of plutonium, a SNM, as a violation of Title 42, USC, Section 2077 may be involved.

117-26875

Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Wannall
Re: Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation,
Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma

X
By airtel 2/27/75, captioned "Unsubs; Unauthorized Possession of Plutonium Resulting in the Contamination of Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased), [redacted] and [redacted] Kerr-McGee Corporation, Nuclear Products Division, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, AEA," Oklahoma City was instructed to immediately institute AEA investigation in line with Departmental instructions and closely coordinate inquiries with LMRDA case. Oklahoma City was instructed to surep promptly.

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X By letter dated 2/20/75, Director of Operations, NRC, furnished a copy of a letter dated 1/21/75, received from OCAW alleging a violation of a NRC regulation. In addition to the allegation, NRC was informed that other nonunion employees have lost their jobs at KMC which could also represent a violation. NRC advised that based upon discussions with the Department of Justice, "we" have concluded that KMC is in possible violation of Title 18, USC, Sections 1505 and 1510, and 10 CFR Section 19.16 (c) and these possible violations should be investigated by the FBI under the criminal provisions of the AEA. By letter 3/4/75, AAG, Criminal Division, was furnished a copy of the 2/20/75, NRC letter along with its enclosures. In this letter, the Department was furnished a summary of the cases currently under investigation at KMC based on Departmental instructions and requested the Department to review the NRC letter and its enclosures to determine if the investigations currently under way by the Bureau are a sufficient response to recent occurrences at KMC, or if additional investigation should be instituted under the provisions of the AEA or Title 18, USC, Sections 1505 and 1510. To date, no response to this letter has been received.

ACTION:

None. For information.

Handwritten: JH, WLA, ELL, Tully, CON

Handwritten: RE 6/7/75, JMA, WRA

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

NR 007 OC PLAIN

836 PM NITEL MAR 26, 1975 DAF **MAR 26 1975**

TO DIRECTOR 159-4005

TELETYPE

FROM OKLAHOMA CITY 159-45 P

UNSUBS; KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED), LMRDA; OOJ, OO:
OKLAHOMA CITY.

FOR INFORMATION BUREAU, MARCH 26, 1975, [REDACTED]
RESIDENT OFFICER, NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD (NLRB),
TULSA, OKLA., PERSONALLY CONTACTED OKLA CITY DIVISION TO
ADVISE HIS OFFICE HAS HAD REFERRED TO THEM TWO CASES OF
POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT (NLRA),
SECTION 8(A), SEE SECTIONS 1 & 3, CONCERNING [REDACTED]
AND [REDACTED] BOTH OF WHOM WERE ACTIVE IN THE OIL,
CHEMICAL AND ATOMIC WORKER'S UNION AS COMMITTEEMEN, KERR
MC GEE CORPORATION (KMC), CIMARRON FACILITY, CRESCENT, OKLA.
IN RECENT PAST [REDACTED] WAS REASSIGNED TO ANOTHER JOB AT FACILITY
AND [REDACTED] FIRED BY KMC. [REDACTED] ADVISED THAT HIS INVESTIGATION
IS SLANTED TOWARD CIVIL ACTION AGAINST KMC IF VIOLATION
SUBSTANTIATED.

6-112 159-4005-30
[REDACTED] ADVISED THAT HIS AGENCY HAS BEEN IN CONTACT

MAR 27 1975

Assoc. Dir.	_____
Dep.-A.D.-Adm.	_____
Dep.-A.D.-Inv.	_____
Asst. Dir.:	_____
Admin.	_____
Comp. Syst.	_____
Ext. Affairs	_____
Files & Com.	_____
Gen. Inv.	_____
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Int. Aff.	_____
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Plan. & Eval.	_____
Spec. Inv.	_____
Training	_____
Legal Coun.	_____
Telephone Rm.	_____
Director Sec'y	_____

b6
b7C

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b7C

37 APR 1 1975

159-45 PAGE TWO

WITH DEPARTMENTAL ATTORNEY, GENERAL CRIMES DIVISION, [REDACTED] ✓ 1.6

[REDACTED], WHO HAD INDICATED THAT THERE WERE APPARENTLY

POSSIBLE CRIMINAL VIOLATIONS CONCERNING [REDACTED] & [REDACTED] UNDER
OOJ, T.18, SECTION 1505 & 1510, AND/OR POSSIBLE VIOLATION
OF ATOMIC ENERGY ACT (AEA) T.10, CFR, PART 19.16C.

[REDACTED] INDICATED THAT HIS AGENCY WAS HOLDING IN ABEYANCE
INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE CIVIL VIOLATIONS PENDING DETER-
MINATION WHETHER OR NOT THEIR INVESTIGATION CONCERNING CRIMINAL
VIOLATION RE OOJ OR AEA.

[REDACTED] WAS ADVISED THAT OKLAHOMA CITY FBI HAD NO
INFORMATION RE ANY CURRENT REQUESTS CONCERNING INVESTIGATION
OF OOJ OR AEA VIOLATIONS RELATED TO [REDACTED] OR [REDACTED]. HE WAS
ADVISED THAT INQUIRIES WOULD BE MADE WITH FBI HQ IN THIS
REGARD TO DETERMINE IF ANY REQUESTS HAD BEEN MADE. IT WAS
SUGGESTED THAT [REDACTED], THROUGH NLRB WASHINGTON, CONTACT USDJ
RE STATUS OF REQUEST FOR ANY ADDITIONAL FBI INVESTIGATION
AND DETERMINE IF HIS AGENCY SHOULD PROCEED WITH THEIR CIVIL
INVESTIGATION.

REQUEST OF THE BUREAU.

b6
b7C

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b6
b7C

159-45 PAGE THREE

IT IS REQUESTED THAT OKLA CITY BE ADVISED WHETHER OR NOT
ANY OOJ OR AEA INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN REQUESTED RE [] &
[] AND TRY TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT ANY SUCH
REQUESTS WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY FORTHCOMING.

b6
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END

MAH FBIHQ ACKOR FOR ONE

WA CLR

APR 10 1964
FBIHQ

Airtel

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1- FOF

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3/27/75

TO: SAC, Oklahoma City (159-45)

From: Director, FBI (159-4005)

UNSUBS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED),
LMRDA; COJ
OO: OC

ReCCtel 3/26/75, and Butolcal 3/27/75.

This will confirm reButelcal wherein you were advised that no request for investigation by the FBI relative to [] and [] has been received from the Department of Justice to date. General Crimes Section of the Department has advised no such request is anticipated at this time.

b6
b7C

Since it has already been suggested to [] National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Tulsa, that NLRB headquarters contact the Department concerning the status of any request for additional investigation by the FBI, Oklahoma City should inform [] only that no request has been received at FBIHQ to date.

ELR: [] (5)

REC-43

5 MAR 31 1975

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.:
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Files & Com. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

MAILED 10

MAR 26 1975

FBI

MAIL ROOM ☒ TELETYPE UNIT ☐

GPO 27-549

March 31, 1975

REC-23

159-4005-37

EX 104



Ohio 44128

b6
b7C

Dear [redacted]:

Your letter of March 23rd has been received.

I regret to inform you that we do not have any additional information concerning the death of Karen Silkwood which can be furnished to you at this time and as I advised you in my letter of March 12th, the results of our inquiries have been furnished to the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice, for a determination.

Sincerely yours,

Clarence M. Kelley
Clarence M. Kelley
Director

1 - Cleveland - Enclosure

NOTE: Response coordinated with Division 11. Karen Silkwood was a representative of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union who was killed in an automobile accident just prior to her scheduled appearance before the Atomic Energy Commission which was conducting an investigation concerning plutonium supplies at an Oklahoma facility. Investigation conducted to date has been sent to the Department of Justice for consideration.

WPH:rcl (4)

As'soc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.: _____
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Files & Com. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

MAIL ROOM ☒

TELETYPE UNIT ☐

GPO 954-546



b6
b7C

March 23, 1975

Ohio 44128

WPH

Dear Mr. Director :

KAREN ⁰ Silkwood-

Thankyou for your letter of March 12, 1975, regarding the death of Karen Silkwood.

Please send me all information ^{my} the FBI has got regarding the death of Karen Silkwood.

EX 104

REC-23

159-4005-32

Thankyou very much.

APR 1 1975

Sincerely,



b6
b7C

ack
3-31-75
WPH:nd

Just
CORRESPONDENCE

~~For~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

F B I

Date: 3/25/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)
 FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (P)

UNSUBS;
 Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased)
 LMRDA; OOJ
 OO: Oklahoma City

Enclosed herewith for Bureau are six copies of LHM dated and captioned as above. One copy of LHM being furnished USA, Oklahoma City.

The enclosed LHM sets forth self-explanatory article appearing in the April, 1975 edition of Ms. relative to captioned case. LHM being submitted for completion of Bureau files.

Deleted Copy Sent [redacted]
 by Letter Dated 5-10-76 [redacted]
 Per FOIPA Request re K. Silkwood

b6
 b7C

② - Bureau (Enc.-6)
 2 - Oklahoma City
 LJO:mbs
 (4)

2cc ROM CRIM. DIV., by 0-6D

1cc LABOR DESK, TICKLER

1cc to AGS-CD(155)
 ATTN JOE TAGE

Approved: 57 APR 8 1975
 Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ Per _____



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
March 25, 1975

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

159-45

Unknown Subjects;
Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased)
LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND
DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1959; OBSTRUCTION
OF JUSTICE

The April, 1975 edition of Ms., a monthly magazine, contained an article entitled, "The Case of Karen Silkwood", authored by Ms. B. J. Phillips. The article is as follows:

No LOC

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

159-45-33

ENCLOSURE

(EXCLUSIVE!)

THE CASE OF KAREN SIKWOOD DEAD BECAUSE SHE KNEW TOO MUCH?

PHOTO ESSAY
EVERYDAY
LIFE IN
A SMALL TOWN
VIVA'S GREAT
BREASTFEEDING
CAPER

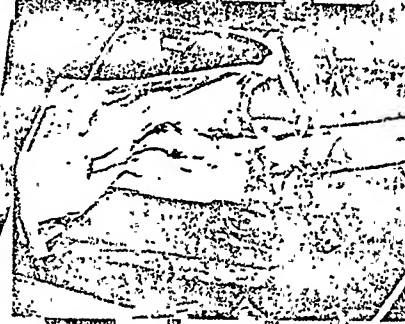
MS

HOW TO USE
VIDEO FOR ART
POLITICS
AND SEX
JUMP ROPE
TURNS
PRO



B.J. PHILLIPS

THE CASE OF KAREN SILKWOOD



THE DEATH OF A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT
WORKER RAISES THE SPECTER OF MURDER AND
A TERRIFYING TECHNOLOGICAL REALITY

The small town of Grants, N.M., would not be the first place to go looking for a nuclear power plant. But it is the place where a woman, Karen Silkwood, died. She was 33 years old when she was found dead in a car on the side of a road near the town. The death of Karen Silkwood has raised the specter of murder and a terrifying technological reality.

The town of Grants is a small town with a population of about 1,000 people. It is located in the heart of the nuclear power industry. The town is home to the Grants Nuclear Power Plant, which is one of the largest nuclear power plants in the world. The town is also home to the Grants Nuclear Power Plant, which is one of the largest nuclear power plants in the world.

Karen Silkwood was a nuclear power plant worker. She was found dead in a car on the side of a road near the town. The death of Karen Silkwood has raised the specter of murder and a terrifying technological reality. The town of Grants is a small town with a population of about 1,000 people. It is located in the heart of the nuclear power industry. The town is home to the Grants Nuclear Power Plant, which is one of the largest nuclear power plants in the world.

The town of Grants is a small town with a population of about 1,000 people. It is located in the heart of the nuclear power industry. The town is home to the Grants Nuclear Power Plant, which is one of the largest nuclear power plants in the world. The town is also home to the Grants Nuclear Power Plant, which is one of the largest nuclear power plants in the world.

A six-months-long chain of events brought her to her journey. But in a real sense, it began before she was born with the detonation of atomic bombs over two Japanese cities. What Tacitus had said of the ancient Roman legions, "They make a desert and call it peace," had taken on a terrifying technological reality. Mankind had unleashed a power from which it could only recoil in horror. Or turn to benefit. So the dream of "harnessing the atom for peaceful purposes"—a catchphrase of the pre-energy-crisis fifties when Arab oil was still cheap—started to take shape.

The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was created in 1946 to oversee the development of these goals, principally the building of reactors to generate electricity. A multibillion-dollar industry sprang up: uranium mining and processing, reactor manufacturing with its myriad of components ranging from special wiring to 750-ton containment vessels. At the forefront in the fledgling industry was an Oklahoma-based company, Kerr-McGee. Founded in 1929 to drill for oil, the company was a perfect blend of two gifted men, the late Senator Robert S. Kerr, "the uncrowned king of the Senate," and Dean A. McGee, often acknowledged to be one of the most technically brilliant and visionary men in the energy industry. Political clout and the long view. Kerr-McGee began to explore for, mine, and process uranium—first for the nuclear weapons program, then for reactors. When planning began in the late sixties on the Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor—the ultimate dream, a power source that creates, "breeds," more fuel than it consumes—the company contracted to produce plutonium fuel pins for the test version of the LMFBFRs.* In 1970, a plutonium-processing

*Fuel pins are eight-foot-long, pencil-thin metal rods containing small pellets of concentrated plutonium. Inserted into the reactor core, they provide fuel for a continuous fission reaction. The rods manufactured by Kerr-McGee were for use in the Fast Flux Test Facility near Richland, Washington. The FFTF is the experimental forerunner of the LMFBFR.

plant went up alongside a uranium plant near Crescent, Oklahoma, thirty miles north of Oklahoma City. The plant took its name, Cimarron Facility, from the nearby river.

It is doubtful that Karen Silkwood knew more about the background of the nuclear power industry than the average American—which is to say very little—when she went to work for Kerr-McGee in the summer of 1972. It was a job certain to attract her, for it involved laboratory work, her forte since her high school days. Born on February 19, 1946, in Longview, Texas, she had grown up in Nederland, a town halfway between Port Arthur and Beaumont. Nederland is in the heart of the Texas petrochemical region and, as in its larger neighboring cities, the night sky is lit by the floodlights and tall torches of oil refinery stacks burning off gaseous waste. A maze of pipes and storage tanks stretches across the flat terrain. Her grandfather worked in one of the refineries and was the family's first member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union.

Her father, a paint contractor, and her mother, a bank teller, recount the ordinary childhood of their eldest daughter. She rode her bike, played tennis, and was very much a big sister to Rosemary, six years younger, and Linda, born 12 years after Karen. As a small child, she had an asthmatic condition, so perhaps she naturally turned to playing nurse with her dolls. Shortly before her death, she was to tell a union official that her early illness had instilled in her an interest in health.

In high school, she played flute in the band, played on the volleyball team, belonged to the Future Homemakers of America. She turned down a place in the majorette corps, however. "Her band teacher," her mother remembers, "told her it was much more important for her to stay in the band than get out there and kick her legs up, so she took his advice." It was as a student that she left her mark. She was a member of the National Honor Society, and one of 22 honor graduates in the

Class of 1964. She excelled in science, especially chemistry, and where she went to Lamar College in Beaumont to study medical technology, she paid her expenses with a scholarship from the Business and Professional Women's Club.

Her best friend throughout childhood recalled that Karen was a good person to ask for notes when someone had missed class. "She took clear, concise, and well-organized notes," Karen Miller Patterson says. "In school she was precise and meticulous." A decade later, notes she had taken would trigger an AEC investigation.

But she was best remembered, her friend said, for other qualities. "As I remember Karen, she was the kind of person who, if something was wrong, was not going to stand by and ignore it. She was not afraid to stick her neck out. When she went into anything, she put everything into it and she stayed with it. It was like that in the band, in sports—even down to batting a volleyball around in my driveway at night. She was intensely loyal. She'd stick up for her friends. And she had a great capacity for having a good time, for laughing. I think that's the one thing most people from school would remember about her."

After her first year in college, Karen went to Kilgore, Texas, to spend the summer with her grandmother. There she met Bill Meadows, and they eloped. They had three children. Meadows worked for one of the oil companies, and the young family moved from one town to another across Texas and Oklahoma oil fields. There were financial difficulties leading to bankruptcy, and marital problems that led to separation. Their marriage broke down after six years, and Karen left with the children to begin life on her own, working in hospitals. When her husband decided to remarry, he filed for divorce, citing incompatibility. She gave him custody of the children while retaining visiting privileges, telling her parents and friends that she felt it was better for the children to grow up in the more stable

atmosphere of her former husband's new marriage. She was alone now. She moved to Oklahoma City and went to work for Kerr-McGee.

Compared to the final months of her life, the first 20 months or so at Kerr-McGee were rather uneventful for Karen. Unlike the majority of workers, she joined the union, perhaps out of memory of her grandfather's stories about the early organizing days of the OCAW. When the union went out on strike in the fall of 1972, she walked the picket lines. The strike was brief, nine weeks, and, from the union's viewpoint at least, difficult. The picket lines were crossed; production wasn't stopped; and, in the end, the union was forced to accept Kerr-McGee's original offer, the one they had struck against. Around that time, she met Drew Stephens, a fellow laboratory analyst who was among the plant's original employees. Stephens was married when they met, but was sued for divorce a few months later. His relationship with Karen was a factor in the end of his marriage.

The couple began to draw one another into their respective enthusiasms. Stephens was a sports-car freak. He taught Karen to drive in competitions and rallies; she went on to earn trophies. She was an excellent driver. They collected records—rock, and Country and Western. And they shared an ardent interest in union activities. In the late spring of 1974, Karen was elected one of three governing committee members of the OCAW local. It was at this point that Karen's life began to change sharply. As would the plutonium fuel she helped to manufacture, Karen Silkwood began to implode, to turn inward a concentrated power, a power intense enough to set off a chain reaction.

What held Karen's concentration was the health and safety of herself and her co-workers who handled plutonium at Kerr-McGee. There is no substance which more deserves concern, for plutonium is the most toxic substance known. It is 20,000 times more lethal than cobra venom, and in very small amounts—a single

particle the size of a grain of pollen—it has been shown to cause cancer in laboratory test animals. Furthermore, plutonium retains its radioactivity for 250,000 years. Exposure to high levels of radiation can sicken and kill; in small doses, radioactive particles can lie latent for years with the possibility of triggering cancer.

The connection between radiation and cancer has been known for 100 years. As early as the 16th century, miners of pitchblende (a form of uranium ore) in German and Czechoslovakian mines were known to develop fatal diseases of the lung. The miners called it *Bergkrankheit*, mountain sickness, the disease that gave them an aver-



SINCE 1970: SEVENTEEN PLUTONIUM ACCIDENTS

age life expectancy of less than 20 years from the day they entered the mines. Pitchblende contains little plutonium, since plutonium's presence in the natural state is very rare. (Plutonium, a transuranic element, is transmuted from uranium during fission reaction. It must then be extracted from reactor waste to produce significant quantities.) Our experience with plutonium has been limited to the past 35 years, not enough time to firmly establish its carcinogenic (cancer-causing) effects in humans. Still, the toxicity of plutonium is known, and laboratory tests indicate that, like other radioactive materials, it is carcinogenic.

In the four years that Kerr-McGee's plutonium plant had been

in operation, there had been 17 contamination incidents, involving 77 employees. In one instance, two men left the plant "hot" and went into a restaurant in Crescent. In another, seven workers received more than the AEC-defined permissible levels of airborne plutonium (and a heated controversy is under way about whether or not those levels are, indeed, low enough to protect human health). During the first week in January, 1974, an employee had, in the words of a report to the AEC, "a small portion of skin excised to remove plutonium in a wound."

Twice Kerr-McGee shipped radioactive wastes in improper containers. In another incident, some drums of waste being stored on a flatbed truck leaked. The truckbed, axle, and tires had to be cut up, the ground underneath it dug up, and everything put into barrels for burial in a nuclear dump. So there was already an alarming history with an extremely hazardous substance when Karen Silkwood assumed her union duties.

As the summer of 1974 opened, Karen and some of her co-workers started to notice what they considered to be a production speedup and a concomitant decline in standards and safety. Additionally, there was a rapid personnel turnover, certainly attributable in part to long work shifts (often 12 hours) and changes from day- to night-work on short notice. Whatever the cause for the high turnover (99 of 287 workers left between January 1 and October 31, 1974, 35 percent of the payroll), it seems axiomatic that such a turnover would cause the experience and skill levels of the work force to decline. Karen began to take notes on occurrences inside the plant. She started to become obsessed with the Cimarron Facility.

On the night of July 31/August 1, 1974, Karen was working a 4 P.M. to 4 A.M. shift in the Emission Spectrography Laboratory. When the two air sample filter papers from the room in which she worked were analyzed on August 1, they indicated that radioactive material had

027/MS.

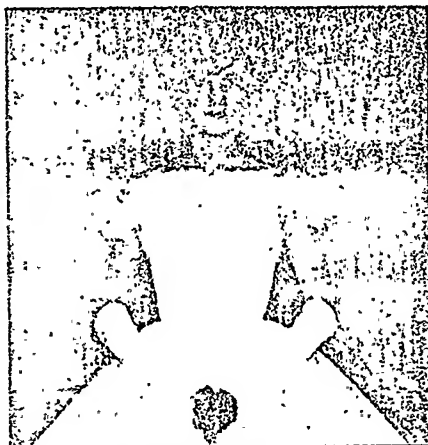
escaped into the room between 4 P.M. and midnight. When urine samples collected from Karen during the following week were analyzed, they showed that she had received some contamination. A full awareness of the implications had not yet come to Karen.

By the end of September, the ramifications were quite real, and Karen had fallen into the spiral of events that led to her death. With two other union committee members, she flew to Washington, D.C., on September 26 to meet with national officials of the OCAW. A contract was coming up for renewal on December 1, and the union local was locked into a struggle for survival. A campaign to decertify the OCAW at Cimarron had begun; an election to determine whether or not the union would continue to represent workers was scheduled for October 16. There was no love lost on either side. Kerr-McGee had a hard-line history on unionization. A strike of OCAW miners at its major uranium mines in New Mexico the previous year had lasted six long, bitter months. But the three union officials from Cimarron came with other worries as well: a series of allegations about health and safety conditions and falsification of quality-control information. The allegations were based largely on notes taken by Karen Silkwood. The OCAW has a record of vigorous concern for occupational safety, and officials in Washington viewed the charges with alarm. Steve Wodka, a member of the Washington staff, recalled their reaction. He feared that if the charges were true, "the consequences here were very deep and very grave, not only for the people in the plant, but for the entire atomic industry and the welfare of the country. If badly made pins were placed into the reactor without deficiencies being caught, there could be an incident exposing thousands of people to radiation."

The following day, the delegation from Cimarron Facility, accompanied by Wodka, recounted their charges to AEC officials. Wodka

then asked them to return and attempt to further document their allegations. Almost parenthetically, Wodka told them that plutonium was thought to cause cancer. It was the first time any of the Oklahomans had been specifically told this important information.

Karen took the role of recorder upon herself. She began to carry a notebook around constantly. At the same time, Stephens had quit working at Kerr-McGee. His interest in issues there had worn thin,



AT 16— A FUTURE HOMEMAKER OF AMERICA

and he was bewildered by Karen's single-minded dedication to the happenings at the Cimarron Facility. "I felt it was consuming everything she had, mentally and physically," Stephens said. "She just lived it, couldn't let it go and relax, particularly in the last month she was alive." He speaks now with regret for not offering her more help and support in her project, but people live their lives as they happen and without the benefit of hindsight. "I never accepted it," he said. "The good times that we'd had together before were being lost to what happened at the plant. I didn't think it was good for either of us, especially for Karen on the basis of the physical considerations. I told her this. She said, 'They need me.'"

Stephens had reason to worry about Karen's physical condition. She started to lose weight; in approximately four months, she would drop from 112 pounds to 94. She had never slept well. "She'd always stay up late with her daddy watching the 'Late Show,'" her mother recalls. "She just couldn't seem to go to sleep before midnight or one o'clock." This, coupled with shift work and growing tension at the plant perhaps led to a series of doctor-prescribed sleeping pills. She was progressively given Placidyl, a hypnotic used for insomnia that carries lengthy warnings of possible psychological and physical dependence in standard medical reference books; followed by prescriptions for Parest and Quaalude, both brand names for the generic drug methaqualone, another sedative and hypnotic that has occasionally been known to produce psychological dependence and, more rarely, physical dependence. It is a sequence of prescriptions that is unwise, if not baffling. It is, unfortunately, within the regrettable, but all-too-common, propensity of American medicine to overprescribe such drugs, and the special tendency to dispense tranquilizers to women. In any event, how much of the drugs she took, how often, and how far back the prescription history goes is impossible to gauge in the absence of confidential medical records. Stephens maintains that she had begun to take them, however, for tranquilization, not for sleep, especially during the last confusing week of her life.

The union won the decertification contest in mid-October. The final tally was 80 to 61 in favor of the OCAW; only 60 workers belonged to the union at that point. Karen kept up her note-taking. On Tuesday, November 5, she returned to work after four days off. She started work at 1:20 P.M. in the Metallography Lab, performing a number of operations. At approximately 6:30, she took her hands out of a glovebox (a sealed box in which one handles radioactive materials)

3 3

In a statement released in late January, the OCAW suggests that Karen was intentionally contaminated by someone else. The union cited an AEC finding that two key urine samples had been improperly labeled so that their identities and dates are uncertain. Additionally, the adulteration of two other urine samples and the presence of high radiation counts in some of Karen's food led the union to conclude that poisoning is a possibility. (According to the AEC report, while preparing her lunch, Karen carried the package of bologna into the bathroom briefly after she had spilled some of a urine sample. The bologna was then returned to the refrigerator.)

Karen Silkwood lived six more days. All but the last day were spent talking to investigators from the AEC and the Oklahoma State Health Department, attempting to determine how she was contaminated and how badly. From November 10 through the evening of November 12, she, Stephens, and her roommate, Sherri Ellis, were in Los Alamos, New Mexico, the place where the atom was first unleashed. Today, this country's most sophisticated equipment for studying radiation is there. All three were placed in an underground vault where extremely sensitive counters would begin to assess how much radiation had remained inside their bodies. One of the ironies of the use of nuclear materials is that the equipment for measuring radiation far outstrips our knowledge of its effects on the human organism. It is known to cause death, induce cancers, trigger genetic damage. But how much radiation? For how long? The broad limits are known, but uncertainties still exist, experimentation continues. Karen, Stephens, and Ellis entered the vault right after the beagles and just before the Rhesus monkeys.

Prior to leaving Los Alamos on the afternoon of November 12, they had a conference with doctors who interpreted the preliminary data. The doctors were able to reassure Karen that she was in no imminent

danger. Her studies indicated what the AEC later termed "a small amount of plutonium, less than one half of the maximum permissible body burden." The maximum permissible body burden is the cumulative amount which cannot be exceeded without risk. What neither the scientists at Los Alamos nor anyone else could tell her was precisely how her present body burden would affect her in 20 or 30 years, the latency period for the development of lung cancer among uranium miners. Yet her mind was put somewhat to rest about the short-term outlook, and she returned to Oklahoma to pick up her work.

Wednesday, November 13, she reported to work for the 8 A.M. shift. A good part of the day was taken up in contract negotiations. For the last time, she wrote in her notebook: "Try to be able to reach a contract by November 26. . . . Meet again Thursday, November 21, 1974, 10 A.M." At 4 P.M., she left the plant and went to the Hub Café in Crescent for a meeting of the negotiating committee. At 6 P.M., she called Stephens to confirm that she would meet Wodka and New York Times reporter David Burnham at a Holiday Inn on the northwest edge of Oklahoma City, approximately 30 miles from Crescent. As the meeting in the café drew to a close, she began to discuss her worries about her health. Fellow committee member Jack Tice relates that "she did become a bit emotional toward the end of the meeting." He added, "She shed tears out of concern for her health. It wasn't an emotional outburst, just a few tears. I didn't think any more about it." Another member offered to drive her home. She declined, saying she'd be all right.

One of the last people to see her alive recounts in a sworn affidavit that Karen clenched her hand around a brown manila folder and a large notebook. The affidavit continues: "She then said there was one thing she was glad about, that she had all the proof concerning the health and safety conditions in the plant, and concerning falsification. As she said this, she clenched her

hand more firmly on the folder and the notebook she was holding. She told me she was on her way to meet Steven Wodka and a New York Times reporter to give them this material. Karen appeared to be somewhat weary on that day, but she was alert, speaking clearly and acting normally, and it would never have crossed my mind that she might not be capable of driving a car safely. I was shocked when I learned the next day that she had been killed in a car accident. It seemed impossible to believe, especially since she had been so determined to deliver the material she had to Mr. Wodka and the newspaper reporter."

Karen got into her 1973 Honda Civic Sedan and started down State Highway 74. It was a dark, windy night. Karen was traveling at 50 to 55 miles an hour on an absolutely straight highway built along the grids drawn with a ruler when Oklahoma was opened to the land rush. The car went off the road 7.3 miles south of Crescent on the left side of the road. It traveled 240 to 250 feet down the shoulder, went over a concrete wall flaring from the northern edge of a culvert running beneath the road. The car slammed head-on into the southern wall. Karen Silkwood apparently died instantaneously.

On that much there is agreement. But there the accord ends. A private accident investigator, A. O. Pipkin Jr., of Dallas, was hired by the OCAW to investigate the crash. He has done more than 2,000 such investigations and has testified in more than 300 court trials. An Oklahoma State Highway patrolman, Rick Fagan, investigated the accident that night. His investigation has since been reviewed by officials of the Highway Patrol, who stand by its conclusions. The two reports could scarcely vary more.

According to the Highway Patrol, Karen went to sleep at the wheel, drove off the road, left two sets of rolling tracks with no evidence of having attempted to brake or control the car; the Honda was airborne

for 24 feet after crossing the northern wall, and plowed into the southern wall three feet above the ground. The Pipkin report, on the contrary, holds that the car went off the road out of control, leaving three tracks because the car was skewed into an attitude that had aligned the right rear wheel with the left front wheel. The car flew over the northern wall, was airborne 20 feet, skidded four feet into the wall. Tread prints taken at the scene on Sunday, November 17—the day Karen was buried in Kilgore, Texas—matched those on the Honda, according to Pipkin. A small, fresh dent on the rear bumper, which under magnification proved to have scratch marks leading from the rear of the car toward the front, indicated to Pipkin that the car had been struck by another vehicle. In this version, either the blow itself or the collision combined with driver overreaction forced the car out of control and caused the fatal accident. The Highway Patrol says that the dent and scratches occurred when the car struck the concrete culvert while being re-

moved by a wrecker. For many technical reasons Pipkin and Dr. B. J. Harris, a structural engineer called in as a consultant, maintain that the dent could not have happened during removal from the crash scene and subsequent towing.

Later microscopic examinations by consulting experts retained by Pipkin revealed no concrete fragments in the dent. Rather, their report indicated contact with another metal surface, and a smudge believed to have come from rubber bumper stripping.

A Highway Patrol spokesman called the crash "a classic" example of a driver asleep at the wheel. There is disagreement here, too, because barring severe wheel misalignment, drivers who fall asleep go off the road on the right. Highways slope away from the centerline, or crown. The crown is designed into a road so that the downward angle and the pull of gravity will gently tug automobiles toward the right shoulder and away from a collision course with approaching vehicles.

The Highway Patrol's claim of

sleep is buttressed by an autopsy report showing methaqualone in the blood, stomach, and liver. There was a trace of alcohol, but the level is so slight that it can be considered insignificant. The methaqualone levels, on the other hand, are consonant with normal metabolism of a large but still therapeutic dose ingested within an hour of her death. The methaqualone cannot definitively be said to have caused sleep, but it would probably have impaired her reactions. This is particularly so if a person had used the drug frequently and had developed the tolerance that could be expected from such usage. It is certain that Karen took the drug with some frequency during her last, extremely stressful days. Whether or not enough was taken often enough to develop a tolerance is not known.

The uncertainty about the drug's effect on Karen is but one anomaly. One wrecker was dispatched to the scene by the Guthrie Police when the first report came in. Halfway there, he was called on his radio and told to return, another wrecker

There are few subjects as daunting as nuclear technology. Its language is arcane, its mathematics mind-boggling, and, after all, it took Einstein to figure it out. Leave it to the physicists. Thus the nuclear industry was allowed to develop without public oversight. It matters little whether an uninformed and apathetic citizenry or a nuclear establishment less than candid about the risks is at fault in this. The point is that the reactors are there, 56 in operation today, with plans to build 850 to 1,400 by the year 2000. They dot our countryside, are cheek by jowl with our cities. And they pose hazards on a scale second only to nuclear warfare.

The possibility of an accident releasing radioactive materials from the core of a nuclear reactor is very real. There have already been a series of near misses, enough to remind us that technology is not always triumphant. Just

as planes crash, bridges collapse, cars are lemons, so do reactor components malfunction. But a major reactor accident could, according to a study prepared, then suppressed for eight years by the AEC, result in 45,000 fatalities and contamination of an area the size of the state of Pennsylvania. The area closest to the accident site would likely be uninhabitable for hundreds of years.

The lengthy lethal life of reactor fuels (plutonium, for example, remains radioactive for a quarter of a million years) poses a second problem: the storage of nuclear wastes. Under present plans, there will be 20,000 metric tons of nuclear wastes by the turn of the century, wastes that will have to be kept out of the biosphere for a time frame almost one hundred times as long as the recorded history of the human race. Not only does this presuppose political and social stability, it also assumes

that the technology to assure safe disposal exists. There are plenty of sci-fi schemes for getting rid of the waste—launching it into perpetual orbit (a risk the missile designers are unwilling to take); dropping it into the tectonic plates in mid-ocean and hoping it will work its way down to the earth's core; letting it melt into the Antarctic ice cap. But the simple fact is that the best anyone can do at this point is provide temporary storage with constant monitoring and safeguards until a method for disposal is found.

Finally, there is the matter of securing nuclear materials from the world's terrorists and black-mailers. A quantity of plutonium roughly the size of a softball is sufficient to build a nuclear weapon. Once the material has been obtained—and hijacking hasn't been proved impossible—it is regarded as quite simple to build a crude weapon. —B.J.P.

had been sent by the Highway Patrol dispatcher. A mix-up, it is explained, between two different agencies. But the truck driver's report was of someone pinned in a wreck, and speed would be crucial.

It is known that Kerr-McGee personnel went to the accident scene. Another Kerr-McGee official was at the hospital where her body was taken. (A macabre extension of her contamination is the fact that the ambulance attendants who picked up her body were checked by the AEC for contamination. Results were negative.)

Whatever the coincidences, the variations between the two accident investigations, a human being was dead and the shock of that fact had to be absorbed by those who knew and loved Karen Silkwood. In Nederland, Texas, two policemen—one of them a high school classmate of Karen's—came to knock on the Silkwoods' door. Her parents were aroused from sleep and told the news. At the Holiday Inn outside Oklahoma City, Stephens, Wodka, and reporter Burnham waited for Karen. Finally, around 10 P.M., they began calling to locate her. When Wodka reached a friend in Crescent, he was told that Karen's car had been towed into town and that she was dead. It was left to Wodka to tell Drew Stephens.

They drove out to the now-deserted accident scene, locating it by headlights when they found her paycheck lying on the ground. They found no notebooks containing information of any consequence then or later when her personal effects were released. Union officials remain convinced that some of Karen's notes are missing. The brown manila folder and notebook referred to in the affidavit have never been found.

Outside the garage in Crescent where Karen's car had been towed, then locked up, Drew Stephens put his head against the wall and wept. In Nederland, Bill Silkwood ran about trying to find an open telegraph office so that he could cable a message he did not know how to phrase. At 2:36 A.M. on November 14, he dispatched his telegram: RE-

QUEST AUTOPSY KAREN GAY SILKWOOD. BILL SILKWOOD FATHER.

The ripples spread from family and friends to the press, the AEC, and eventually, to the FBI and the Justice Department. Attention was focused as it had never been before on the nuclear power industry, its safety in view of the terribly toxic materials it used, and, indeed, beyond, to questioning the wisdom of building reactors when a serious accident could endanger the lives of thousands. (See box, page 65.)

There are risks inherent in current plans to rely on nuclear power for electricity. This is the specter raised by the life and death of Karen Silkwood. In a more immediate sense, her presence still haunts Kerr-McGee's Cimarron Facility. Nearly two months after her death, the AEC released reports of its investigations into allegations developed from information she provided. Of 39 charges concerning health and safety, 20 were substantiated wholly or in part. Three violations of AEC regulations dealing with health and safety were found. Among the allegations that were confirmed were the company's failure to set up a routine procedure for assuring that respirators were properly functioning (respirators are the only defense against inhaling plutonium when it has escaped into the air), and an incident in which plutonium was stored in unsafe amounts (since plutonium can reach critical mass—the point at which a nuclear chain reaction can begin—there is a risk of a nuclear explosion if it is improperly handled or stored). Additionally, the report confirmed that operating errors had resulted in worker contamination. Furthermore, in the area of quality control, it was shown that photographic negatives had been touched up with a black felt-tip pen, a fact which many consider significant but the AEC does not; and that some analytic data had been misused.

Two other contamination incidents occurred at the Cimarron Facility on December 17, and five employees were exposed to radiation. Kerr-McGee promptly closed the plant, charging that "some of

the recent incidents . . . have been contrived." This is an allegation that remains unproved, except for the still-mysterious adulteration of Karen's urine samples. All the workers were laid off for 10 days and production ceased. The company then began administering polygraph tests to several of its employees. The questions workers were asked while hooked up to the lie detector delved into such areas as whether or not they had ever talked to Karen, belonged to the union, stolen anything from Kerr-McGee (a question that would show up the same on a polygraph, for a pencil or 50 pounds of plutonium), used narcotics, talked to a reporter, had an affair with another employee.

After the lie-detector tests, the staff of an isolated warehouse reportedly trebled when eight workers were transferred there. Among them were the chairman of the union local and a former committeeman. They were told that they were forbidden to go to any other area of the plant and that a supervisor had to be with them at all times, even when they went to the bathroom. The OCAW has filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board about the lie-detector tests. The polygraph tests are continuing at this writing.

In Oklahoma City, two state legislators have called for an investigation into Kerr-McGee's plutonium plant. A similar move is under way in the Congress. Drew Stephens searches his memory for the key that will unlock the mystery surrounding Karen's death. In Nederland, Texas, the Silkwood family waits for an explanation of what happened to Karen, and why.

Karen Silkwood's story remains star-crossed. On New Year's Eve, Trooper Rick Fagan, the highway patrolman who investigated Karen's accident, patrolled State Highway 74. A few miles from the place where she died, he was struck from behind by a drunken driver and was critically injured.

B. J. Phillips is a "Ms." staff writer. Later, she will explore the implications of the use of nuclear power.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

REPORTING OFFICE OKLAHOMA CITY	OFFICE OF ORIGIN OKLAHOMA CITY	DATE 4/7/75	INVESTIGATIVE PERIOD 3/28-3/75
TITLE OF CASE UNSUBS; KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)		REPORT MADE BY <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 200px; height: 20px;"></div>	TYPED BY jr
		CHARACTER OF CASE LMRDA; OOJ	b6 b7C

REFERENCE: Oklahoma City airtel to the Bureau, dated 4/2/75.

-P-

ADMINISTRATIVE

It is noted that all logical investigation regarding captioned case has been completed and reported. As set out in this report, USA, Oklahoma City was consulted regarding prosecutive aspects of this case. USA advised that no violation of LMRDA or OOJ was apparent.

By referenced airtel, Oklahoma City furnished to Bureau, copies of French magazine article, which appeared in 2/15/75 edition of "Paris Match" and requested that translation of this article be made. Upon receipt of translation, Oklahoma City will disseminate article and

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CLAIMED				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NONE	ACQUIT- TALS	CASE HAS BEEN: PENDING OVER ONE YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO PENDING PROSECUTION OVER SIX MONTHS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
CONVIC.	FUG.	FINES	SAVINGS	RECOVERIES			
APPROVED <i>KW/H&P</i> SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE						DO NOT WRITE IN SPACES BELOW	
COPIES MADE: (6- Bureau (159-4005) 1- USA, Oklahoma City 2- Oklahoma City (159-45).						159-4005-34 15 APR 10 1975 EX-111	
ICC LABOR UNIT Dissemination Record of Attached Report						Notations	
Agency	1cc ROM CRIM. DIV					<i>Duffy</i> <i>Five</i> SIX DATA PROC	
Request Recd.							
Date Fwd.	4/14/75						
How Fwd.	O.G.P.						
By	<i>Errol</i>						

50 APR 15 1975

OC 159-45

place case in closed status.

LEAD

OKLAHOMA CITY

AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA. Will place case
in closed status upon dissemination of above mentioned
French article.

Cover Page
B*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to: 1- USA, Oklahoma City

b6
b7C

Report of: [REDACTED]

Office: Oklahoma City

Date: 4/7/75

Field Office File #: 159-45

Bureau File #: 159-4005

Title: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)Character: LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE ACT
OF 1959; OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

Synopsis:

During period 3/28-31/75, prosecutive aspects of this case were discussed at length with AUSA [REDACTED] and USA [REDACTED] WDO, Oklahoma City, at which time they advised that investigation to date did not appear to reveal any violation of the LMRDA or OOJ Statutes in regard to this case.

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b7C

-P-

DETAILS: AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

During the period of March 28, through 31, 1975, SA [REDACTED] discussed the prosecutive aspects of this case with [REDACTED] Assistant U. S. Attorney and [REDACTED] U. S. Attorney, Western District of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City. They advised that investigation to date did not appear to reveal any violation of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959; or the Obstruction of Justice Statutes in regard to this case.

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b7C

[REDACTED] advised that he was desirous of having the Department of Justice and his office make a statement regarding the conclusion of this case and that he anticipated that he would be in contact with the Department in this regard.

1*

4/16/75

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI
(ATTN: RESEARCH SECTION)

FROM: SAC, NEW YORK (117-373)

SUBJECT: UNSUBS;
Unauthorized Possession of
Plutonium Resulting in Contamination of
KAREN G. SILKWOOD (Deceased),

[REDACTED]

b6
b7C

○ Kerr McGee Corporation (KMC),
Nuclear Products Division,
Cimarron Facility
Crescent, Oklahoma
AEA
(OO: OC)

ReCCairtel to the Director, 4/11/75.

On 4/16/75, it was established that the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc. (NRDC), does have offices at 15 West 44th Street, NYC, with telephone listing 869-0150.

- 3 - Bureau (RM)
 - (1 - Research Section)
 - (1) 159-4005
- 2 - Oklahoma City (117-51) (RM)
- 1 - New York

NOT RECORDED
102 APR 24 1975

TJD:kmm
(7)

ORIGINAL FILED IN 117-373

7029

NY 117-373

A non-specific telephone call to the above number, developed the following information:

The NRDC is a non-profit, tax exempt membership organization dedicated to the protection of America's endangered natural resources and to improving the quality of the human environment. When questioned as to whether or not the organization is opposed to the use of nuclear reactors for the generation of energy, the reply was in the affirmative specifically specifying those systems which utilize "liquid metal fast breeder reactors". This call was also able to establish that [redacted] who could be contacted care of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, 1126 16th Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C., is on the Board of Directors of NRDC.

b6
b7c

FBI

Date: 4/11/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via A I R T E L _____
(Priority)TO: DIRECTOR, FBI
Attention: Research Section

FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (117-51)(P)

RE: UNSUBS;
UNAUTHORIZED POSSESSION OF PLUTONIUM
RESULTING IN CONTAMINATION OF KAREN G.
SILKWOOD (DECEASED), [REDACTED] AND
[REDACTED] KERR MC GEE CORPORATION (KMC),
NUCLEAR PRODUCTS DIVISION, CIMARRON FACILITY,
CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA
AEA
OO: Oklahoma Cityb6
b7cRe Oklahoma City teletype to Bureau, 4/7/75 and
Bureau teletype to Oklahoma City, 3/14/75.Enclosed herewith for the Bureau two copies
of an article which appeared in the January, 1975 Health
Physics Society Newsletter.For information of the New York Division, the Bureau
in referenced teletype designated captioned case a Bureau
Special.b6
b7cAs set out in referenced Oklahoma City teletype,
on 4/7/75 [REDACTED] KMC, Oklahoma
City, advised it was KMC's understanding that [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers
International Union (OCAW), Washington, D. C., is on the
Board of Directors of the Natural Resources Defense Council,
15 West 44th, New York, New York. [REDACTED] advised it was his3-Bureau (Enc. 2)
(1-159-4005)
2-New York
2-Oklahoma City
LJO/sal
(7)159-4005
NOT RECORDED
25 MAY 1975
CARBON COPY58 MAY 6 1975
Approved: _____
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

OC 117-51

understanding this commission is considered to be an anti-nuclear (industry) group.

Oklahoma City indices negative re Natural Resources Defense Commission. Bureau has separately advised Bufiles contain no information identifiable with this commission.

It is recalled [] in his capacity with OCAW directed a telegram to the then Attorney General of the U. S., 11/13/74, and as a result was the original complainant in case entitled, "UNSUBS; KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased), LMRDA; OCJ, OO: Oklahoma City, " Oklahoma City file 159-45, Bufile 159-4005. b6 b7c

It would be of interest to determine if [] a representative of the OCAW, is in fact in a leadership position in a so-called anti-nuclear group.

An article appeared in the 4/7/75 edition of the Oklahoma City Times, a daily newspaper published at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, captioned "Nuclear Plant Perils Cited," which article in part indicated an environmental scientist appeared before an Oklahoma State Legislative Committee, the House Committee on Environmental Affairs. The article identified the scientist as Dr. TERRY R. LASH, Staff Manager of the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., which council was identified in the article as a citizens lobby "against nuclear development until some very disturbing problems are resolved." It would appear the Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., is likely identical with the similarly named group mentioned above by [] listing the address 15 West 44th, New York, New York. b6 b7c

Article enclosed for the Bureau was obtained from [] Health and Safety, captioned facility, who voluntarily made the article available. The article was obtained from the 1/75 issue of the Health Physics Society Monthly Newsletter. []

[]. The article makes reference to a national meeting of Nuclear critics held in Washington, D. C., 11/15-17/74, which meeting was entitled "Critical Mass, 1974."

OC 117-51

The above-mentioned article is being submitted to the Bureau for information and for the completion of Bufiles.

For the additional information of the Bureau, [] additionally advised the Institute of Nuclear Materials Management, a legitimate nuclear industry management organization, is holding its annual meeting in New Orleans, La., in mid 6/75. KMC management personnel are members of this group.

b6
b7C

[] advised included in the meeting activities is a 6/20/75 panel entitled, "Safeguards, the Press, and the Public." Included on the panel as representatives of the information media and nuclear critic representation are the following:

D. BURNHAM, New York Times
T. COCHRAN, Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.
D. COMEY, Businessmen for the Public, Inc.
R. NEWBURGER, Nucleonics Week

[] advised four panel members are listed as representing the nuclear industry, among which are [] International Research and Technological Corporation.

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b7C

[] noted it is ironic that TAYLOR is appearing as a nuclear industry representative rather than a critic since that [] is identical with the [] who authored the controversial series of articles which appeared in the New Yorker magazine was critical of the nuclear safeguard system.

The above information is furnished Bureau for their information in the event further complaints are received relative to the SILKWOOD case and any additional complaints concerning other nuclear problems.

LEADS

NEW YORK

AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK - Will furnish Bureau and Oklahoma City Division any pertinent information

OC 117-51

concerning Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.,
15 West 44th. and any information which would relate
 with that group.

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b7C

April 24, 1975

UNSUBS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
MURDA; OOJ
(OO: OKLAHOMA CITY)

The contents thereof, where pertinent, must be reported under appropriate captions and afforded whatever investigative attention is necessary.

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b7C

1 - Mr. Gebhardt (Attn.: Accounting and Fraud Section),
sent direct with enclosure

MEB:lj
(4)

REC-37

$$159 - 4002 = 35$$

APR 25 1975

ENCLOSURE

MAILED 11
APR 24 1975
FBI

4929 MAY 05 1975

MAIL ROOM ☒ TELETYPE UNIT ☐

Assoc. Dir. _____
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Ext. Affairs _____
Files & Com. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH

Article on page 54 of the February 15, 1975, issue of "Paris Match."

★

★

★

"THE PLUTONIUM LADY"

This could be a headline for a horror story of the kind that used to come out in installments. But it is a real FBI investigation: a woman died on a U. S. highway. Was she connected with a gang of plutonium thieves who wanted to manufacture a bomb? Did she fall into a trap? It remains a complete mystery; a mystery which frightens America.

Seated on the well-padded stools of the Holiday Inn bar, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, three men ordered a new round of drinks. In the discreet light of red lanterns, they were waiting for Karen Silkwood. For several days, now, she had been the only topic of conversation. The young woman had been contaminated by plutonium. Her apartment, likewise, had been contaminated by this radioactive element. The "Kermac" plant in Crescent which treats one-and-one-half tons of plutonium and uranium for peaceful purposes, suspects Karen of having stolen several kilograms of radioactive elements. Miss Silkwood, an active militant labor union member, defended herself, in turn, by attacking "Kermac" "which," she contended, "does not respect the security measures imposed by the Atomic Energy Commission."

The bartender served the new round of drinks. The most nervous of the trio looked at his watch once more. His name is David Burnham. He is a journalist in New York. His neighbor's name is Steve Wodka. Mr. Wodka is a lawyer for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (International) Union (OCAW Union); last September, Karen sent him thirty-nine complaints against "Kermac," motivated by seventy-three cases of contamination. The third man, Drew Stephens, had previously been employed by "Kermac," and had since resigned. For two years, Karen had been his girlfriend.

TRANSLATED BY: MEB

April 23, 1975

b6

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ENCLOSURE

Again, David Burnham looked at his watch. If he had come from New York, it was because his friend Wodka had telephoned him saying: "I have a rendezvous with Miss Silkwood who is to hand over to me an explosive file which you can examine." David immediately took the first plane to Oklahoma. Now in the presence of his two companions, he had been waiting for three hours.

"Is she habitually late?" - asked David, impatiently.

"No," replied Drew; "provided she has had no mishaps..."

David Burnham would never write the interview of his life.

Steve Wodka would never plead in court the case which would make his career.

Drew Stephens would never again press Karen to his heart.

Drew's foreboding turned out to be correct: the young woman met with tragedy. On U. S. 74, at the wheel of her white car, bearing license number YF8261, Karen was speeding, despite the speed limit, to her rendezvous. She was a good driver, since she had taken part in numerous car rallies. And yet, on the long straight line without danger, her little racing car inexplicably left the highway and turned over into a concrete ditch. Mangled sheet metal was removed from Karen's lifeless body: her skull was fractured, her rib cage was caved in, and her arms and legs were broken. Pretty Karen Silkwood was now only a broken, disjointed body whose looks were unbearable. David, Steve and Drew quickly went to the scene of the accident. It was 11:00 p.m. at night-time and pitch black. With the beam of the headlights of their car, they inspected everything, without finding anything unusual, except for the fact that the police were unable to find, either in the car or in her clothing or in the immediate surroundings, the famous file which Karen was supposed to have brought along.

"It must have been a tremendously dangerous file because they decided to do away with her!" - Wodka burst out, in a frenzy.

The police report concluded that it was an accident. But the lawyer did not agree. He hired a private detective from Dallas, O. D. Piploin, a former New Mexico police officer, who specialized in the reconstruction of accidents.

Piploin investigated, searched, interrogated. His conclusion, likewise, was that it was an accident. But he did not exclude the possibility that it could have been caused intentionally. In effect, he indicated to the Union's lawyer that the Honda had a dent on the right rear bumper: whereas, the car had turned over on its left side.

"The possibility," declared Piploin, "that Miss Silkwood's Honda might have been intentionally hit by another car cannot be excluded."

"But who could have done it?" asked David Burnham.

Kermac? Is Kermac fed up with the trials and tribulations which it has known since it was founded in 1970, due to Karen's activities as a labor union member? The conflict between management and the female laboratory technician arose because she accused the plant of not setting up a system of protection which would prevent leaks and contamination. Plutonium is, in effect, extremely dangerous: a fragment the size of a pinhead can paralyze a lung "100,000 times more rapidly than the venom of a rattlesnake" and "10,000 times more rapidly than potassium cyanide." If absorbed in small doses, it can cause cancer of the bone or leukemia. In order to avoid these risks, plutonium is stored in airtight, sealed containers or barrels, resistant to the most violent impacts. It is never handled out in the open air, but in special caissons, resembling incubators in a maternity ward. The female laboratory technician, dressed like a nurse, puts her hands in huge neoprene gloves, fixed to port-holes imbedded in glass partitions. The air pressure inside is less than that of the room. In short, a whole system must be constructed so as to prevent even the tiniest particle of plutonium from escaping.

Karen Silkwood, last July, had, like other colleagues, been severely contaminated. For her, the Kermac plant's security system was a ... sieve!

Two months had passed by. On December 5, at 6:30 p.m. in room 135, the female laboratory technician had reduced plutonium capsules to powder. She removed her hands from the gloves, and allowed herself a break. For fifteen minutes she had been cleaning the element of its impurities by means of an ultrasonic device, inspected it under a microscope and had it X-rayed. Before leaving the laboratory, Karen passed through the gamma ray detector: her hands were contaminated.

She was sent to the infirmary and declared not in danger. But, in amazement, it was discovered that the young woman's apartment was also contaminated. The logical deduction was that the place had been used to store plutonium. "Kermac" immediately counterattacked. Without making any formal accusations, Kermac did not exclude the hypothesis that Miss Silkwood could have had some contact with plutonium thieves. Kermac does not care on behalf of whom. It is up to the FBI to find out. It is their job. Federal Agent Steve Olson was sent to Crescent on an assignment. He arrived there after Miss Silkwood's fatal accident.

In a hotel room, that same evening, Steve Olson, the FBI Agent, was bent over some files. His job was not only to determine if there had been a theft, but who would profit from it. Was it carried out in order to profit a nuclearly underdeveloped power? This is very unlikely. Chances are more likely that it was done in favor of a terrorist movement. The first file was that of "Kermac" which attacked its employee. The next file was that of the labor union which Wodka handed over, and which revealed twenty defects, more or less well founded on the part of the plant. A third file was one which had been drafted by a committee of six officials from the AEC (the American Atomic Energy Commission) who had conducted an investigation of the plant's facilities. Finally, the last file contained the autopsy report which stated: "The traces of plutonium found in the young woman's liver and lungs are far too small to have caused sudden death." Steve Olson continued reading. The seven doctors, who had performed two autopsies, were unanimous in pointing out the presence of a large quantity of methaqualon -- a powerful hallucinatory drug which Karen could obtain with a doctor's prescription and which she used generously -- "the medicine could not make Miss Silkwood 'get high' to the extent of losing control of her car," stated Drew Stephens to the FBI Agent. "I knew her very well. We even smoked marijuana together. She knew very well how much of the stimulants as well as of the sedatives, to take. She never 'got high.' As far as methaqualon is concerned, her system was accustomed to it."

"Believe me, Inspector, the disappearance of the file which she was supposed to have turned over to us signifies that she was put away because she was becoming troublesome," said Wodka, insistingly, to the FBI Agent.

Steve Olson set out on the hunt. As the investigation progressed, the unknown and troubled person of a new Karen Silkwood gradually came to light. First of all, there was the ardent labor union member's sentimental life. At age twenty-eight, she was divorced, mother of three children, who were entrusted to the father. According to witnesses, she did not suffer from the divorce in any respect whatsoever. Then, Olson was astonished to learn that Karen divided her love between Drew Stephens and a girlfriend, a Cherrie Ellis, who had a passion for rodeos and always dressed like a man. This free love is calmly explained by Drew, who said: "Karen was, undoubtedly, due to her Indian blood, a rebel. She balked at the restraints of society."

This was a good breakthrough. Steve Olson continued his investigation into the dead woman's past. He went to the May Avenue Bank. Amiably the young woman's account was handed over to him: Karen was not a millionaire: far from it. She bought her car and motorcycle, as well as her stereo set, her television and her wardrobe on credit. This amounted to a total indebtedness of \$3,798 which Karen tried to stem, by borrowing money from various banks. For someone who earned only \$8,210 a year, this could be a motive to steal plutonium, according to Steve Olson.

But, Steve Olson wondered: how can anybody smuggle plutonium out of the plant, in spite of the guards, the dogs, the detection system which everyone leaving the Kermac premises must undergo? He questioned the personnel (136 employees) and discovered that the detection system is deceptive. First of all, resolute, armed commando teams with good contacts inside the plant, could enter the premises of "Kermac" whenever they wanted to. But, over and above all, the detection system is fantastic. It would set off the alarm at the drop of a pin, to such an extent that the guard, tired of so many useless signals, would resort to setting it on again and would not search the person whose entry or exit had caused the alarm to go off. But, Steve Olson was not at the end of his surprises. He learned that, if each milligram of plutonium is rigorously accounted for, its manipulation involves losses of up to 2%, which the Atomic Energy Commission tolerates, without requesting that an investigation be made: 2% which undoubtedly not everyone loses. It seems unbelievable that an element as terrifying as plutonium, which is thought of as being guarded like the gold in Fort Knox, is guarded in such a loose manner. Unfortunately, however, this is the case.

"It is surprising that no one has taken up nuclear terrorism yet," states physicist Ted Taylor, a manufacturer of the most minaturized atomic bombs, "for the means to steal really and truly does exist." It is sufficient to use "M.U.F.," an abbreviation which signifies "material unaccounted for." This corresponds to all the plutonium which is still being treated and which is impossible to inventory, account for, or keep under surveillance. A laboratory technician holding a position which gives access to plutonium, as was in Miss Silkwood's case, could steal thirty kilograms (66 lbs.) of the element without anyone noticing it. The theft would be discovered only if an arrest had been made at the plant and only after six months to one year: enough time to enable an organization to make its bomb.

In early January, after Karen's death, the Kermac plant temporarily closed its doors and stopped production of plutonium bars destined for the nuclear center of Hanford, in the State of Washington. For 48 hours, a count was taken of all the "material unaccounted for": in the thermic caissons, in the robot machines of the production chain, in the plant's ventilation system. All the plutonium -- minus the famous 2% margin -- was recovered.

It remains a complete mystery. In effect, since the investigations have not made it possible to discover plutonium on Karen's person and since the verifications made at the Kermac plant have not revealed any theft, the enigma lives on. The question which faces the investigators is the following: was the plutonium stolen from the plant and, perhaps stored by the female laboratory technician at home and, if so, was it returned by the thieves who had gotten wind of the investigations by the FBI and the AEC? If such were the case, the events in Oklahoma City would turn out to be extremely dangerous. For what authority, from here on in, could guarantee us that the famous homemade bomb, which can be easily carried in a simple suitcase, could not be made by someone some day?

JEAN NOLI

caption under picture, middle of page 55:
Karen, found dead, contaminated by plutonium.

F B I

Date: 4/2/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)

FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45)(P)

SUBJECT: UNSUBS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
LMRDA; OOJ

OO: OKLAHOMA CITY

Deletal Copy Sent [redacted]

by Letter Dated 5-10-75

Per FOIPA Request [redacted]

b6
b7c

Enclosed herewith is an article (in French) from the 2/15/75 edition of "Paris Match" and two copies of a rough English translation.

For information of the Bureau, on 4/2/75, [redacted] Regulation and Control, Nuclear Division, Kerr Mc Gee Corporation (KMC), made available copy of an article, which appeared in the Paris, France weekly periodical known as "Paris Match", which was obtained from the 2/15/75 edition. This article relates to KAREN GAY SILKWOOD. [redacted] also made available a translation of the article. [redacted] advised that this English translation is rather rough, in that the company did not immediately have available anyone who was sufficiently proficient in French to allow a fully accurate translation to be made.

b6
b7c

A review of the English translation at Oklahoma City, indicates that the article appears to be rather fanciful; however, it is unusual in that it includes certain details which have not thus far appeared in the American media. [redacted] was the likely source of much of the information contained in the article.

APR 25 1975

② Bureau (Enc. 3)
2- Oklahoma City
LJO/jr
(4)

ENCLOSURE

SEEN [initials]

Approved: [signature] Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

OC 159-45

Request of the Bureau

It is requested that the enclosed French magazine article be translated and thereafter, furnished to Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City thereafter will make necessary dissemination of translated version of the article.

Assoc. Dir. _____
 Dep. AD Adm. _____
 Dep. AD Inv. _____
 Asst. Dir.:
 Admin. _____
 Comp. Syst. _____
 Ext. Affairs _____
 Files & Com. _____
 Gen. Inv. _____
 Ident. _____
 Inspection _____
 Intell. _____
 Laboratory _____
 Plan. & Eval. _____
 Spec. Inv. _____
 Training _____
 Legal Coun. _____
 Telephone Rm. _____
 Director Sec'y _____

FBI Finds No Foul Play in Auto Death

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—The FBI says it found no evidence of foul play in the death of Karen Silkwood, a worker at Kerr-McGee's Crescent plutonium plant who died in a car wreck Nov. 13.

The FBI findings back up an Oklahoma Highway Patrol investigation that discounted allegations that Miss Silkwood's car had been forced off the road.

Miss Silkwood died when her car crashed into a culvert near Crescent. She reportedly was en route to a meeting with a New York Times reporter and a union representative to discuss safety conditions at the plant.

Deleted Copy Sent _____

by Letter Dated 5-10-76 *Am b*
 Per FOIA Request *Re K. Silkwood*

b6
 b7C

154-4005-A -

NOT RECORDED

182 AUG 4 1975

The Washington Post _____
 Washington Star-News _____
 Daily News (New York) _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The National Observer _____
 The Los Angeles Times 16

MAY 3 1975

Date _____

FILE IN

159-4005

5/3/75

AUG 12 1975

Justice Department Doubtful of Killing Of Atomic Worker

By DAVID BURNHAM
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 1—The Justice Department said today that the death of a young woman who had raised serious safety questions about an Oklahoma plutonium factory did not appear to be murder.

The department's announcement came five and a half months after the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union asked it to investigate the Nov. 13 car crash that took the life of Karen G. Silkwood, a 28-year-old technician who worked in a factory of the Kerr-McGhee Nuclear Corporation near Crescent, Okla.

While the Justice Department spokesman said the Federal Bureau of Investigation had found no evidence that Miss Silkwood had been murdered, he said that two aspects of the case were still under investigation.

The spokesman, Robert L. Stevenson, said the F.B.I. was still looking into allegations that Miss Silkwood's rights as a union member may have been violated.

Plutonium Possession

He said the second aspect was the possible illegal possession by some unnamed person or persons of plutonium, a carefully guarded substance that is considered highly dangerous both as a cause of cancer and as the raw material of atomic bombs.

A spokesman for the Senate Government Operations Committee said the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union last week submitted a confidential letter "detailing what it considered to be outstanding issues" of the F.B.I.'s investigation.

Both the union and the committee declined to make public the contents of the letter. But the committee spokesman said it had been forwarded to the General Accounting Office, which, at the request of Senator Lee Metcalf, Democrat of Montana, is investigating the quality of the inquiry by various Federal agencies looking into the Silkwood case.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 7-1-85 BY 9145 C1-JO

#251-957

b6
b7C

NOT RECORDED
182 AUG 5 1975

Deleted Copy Sent

by Letter Dated 5-10-76

Per FOIPA Request

The Washington Post

Washington Star-News

Daily News (New York)

The New York Times

The Wall Street Journal

The National Observer

The Los Angeles Times

Date

MAY 2 1975

AUG 5 1975

MS

FILE IN

159-4005

UNRECORDED COPY FILED IN

117-2696-A

117-2703-A

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : *Wn* DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)

DATE: 5/9/75

FROM : SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45)(P)

SUBJECT: UNSUBS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
LMRDA; OOJ
OO: Oklahoma City

Re Oklahoma City airtel to Bureau, 4/2/75; Oklahoma City report of SA [redacted], 4/7/75; Oklahoma City letter to Oklahoma City, 4/24/75; and Bureau telephone call to Oklahoma City, 5/8/75. b6
b7c

Enclosed for the Bureau six copies of a LHM dated and captioned as above. One copy LHM furnished U. S. Attorney, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

As set out in referenced Oklahoma City report, all logical investigation re captioned case has been completed and reported and USA, Oklahoma City, advised no violation of LMRDA or OOJ is apparent.

Enclosed LHM sets forth self-explanatory article appearing in the 2/15/75 issue of Paris Match relative to captioned case. LHM being submitted for completion of Bufiles.

LEADS

Deleted Copy Sent
by Letter Dated 5-10-76 [redacted]
Per FOIPA Request [redacted]

b6
b7c

OKLAHOMA CITY

AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA - Will conduct investigation requested in referenced Bureau telephone call.

2-Bureau (Enc. 6)
2-Oklahoma City
LJO/sal
(4)

ENCLOSURE

REC-59

MAY 19 1975

ST 112

SIX

2cc ROM CRIM. DIV., by 0-6D

1cc LABOR DESK, TIGER

58 MAY 23 1975

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

*In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.*

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

May 9, 1975

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND
DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1959; OBSTRUCTION
OF JUSTICE

The February 12, 1975 issue of Paris Match, a French language periodical published at Paris, France, contained an article entitled, "The Plutonium Lady." A translation of the article is as follows:

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH

Article on page 54 of the February 15, 1975, issue of "Paris Match."

*

*

*

"THE PLUTONIUM LADY"

This could be a headline for a horror story of the kind that used to come out in installments. But it is a real FBI investigation: a woman died on a U. S. highway. Was she connected with a gang of plutonium thieves who wanted to manufacture a bomb? Did she fall into a trap? It remains a complete mystery; a mystery which frightens America.

Seated on the well-padded stools of the Holiday Inn bar, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, three men ordered a new round of drinks. In the discreet light of red lanterns, they were waiting for Karen Silkwood. For several days, now, she had been the only topic of conversation. The young woman had been contaminated by plutonium. Her apartment, likewise, had been contaminated by this radioactive element. The "Kermac" plant in Crescent which treats one-and-one-half tons of plutonium and uranium for peaceful purposes, suspects Karen of having stolen several kilograms of radioactive elements. Miss Silkwood, an active militant labor union member, defended herself, in turn, by attacking "Kermac" "which," she contended, "does not respect the security measures imposed by the Atomic Energy Commission."

The bartender served the new round of drinks. The most nervous of the trio looked at his watch once more. His name is David Burnham. He is a journalist in New York. His neighbor's name is Steve Wodka. Mr. Wodka is a lawyer for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (International) Union (OCAW Union); last September, Karen sent him thirty-nine complaints against "Kermac," motivated by seventy-three cases of contamination. The third man, Drew Stephens, had previously been employed by "Kermac," and had since resigned. For two years, Karen had been his girlfriend.

Again, David Burnham looked at his watch. If he had come from New York, it was because his friend Wodka had telephoned him saying: "I have a rendezvous with Miss Silkwood who is to hand over to me an explosive file which you can examine." David immediately took the first plane to Oklahoma. Now in the presence of his two companions, he had been waiting for three hours.

"Is she habitually late?" - asked David, impatiently.

"No," replied Drew; "provided she has had no mishaps..."

David Burnham would never write the interview of his life.

Steve Wodka would never plead in court the case which would make his career.

Drew Stephens would never again press Karen to his heart.

Drew's foreboding turned out to be correct: the young woman met with tragedy. On U. S. 74, at the wheel of her white car, bearing license number YF8261, Karen was speeding, despite the speed limit, to her rendezvous. She was a good driver, since she had taken part in numerous car rallies. And yet, on the long straight line without danger, her little racing car inexplicably left the highway and turned over into a concrete ditch. Mangled sheet metal was removed from Karen's lifeless body: her skull was fractured, her rib cage was caved in, and her arms and legs were broken. Pretty Karen Silkwood was now only a broken, disjointed body whose looks were unbearable. David, Steve and Drew quickly went to the scene of the accident. It was 11:00 p.m. at night-time and pitch black. With the beam of the headlights of their car, they inspected everything, without finding anything unusual, except for the fact that the police were unable to find, either in the car or in her clothing or in the immediate surroundings, the famous file which Karen was supposed to have brought along.

"It must have been a tremendously dangerous file because they decided to do away with her!" - Wodka burst out, in a frenzy.

The police report concluded that it was an accident. But the lawyer did not agree. He hired a private detective from Dallas, O. D. Piploin, a former New Mexico police officer, who specialized in the reconstruction of accidents.

Piploin investigated, searched, interrogated. His conclusion, likewise, was that it was an accident. But he did not exclude the possibility that it could have been caused intentionally. In effect, he indicated to the Union's lawyer that the Honda had a dent on the right rear bumper: whereas, the car had turned over on its left side.

"The possibility," declared Piploin, "that Miss Silkwood's Honda might have been intentionally hit by another car cannot be excluded."

"But who could have done it?" asked David Burnham.

Kermac? Is Kermac fed up with the trials and tribulations which it has known since it was founded in 1970, due to Karen's activities as a labor union member? The conflict between management and the female laboratory technician arose because she accused the plant of not setting up a system of protection which would prevent leaks and contamination. Plutonium is, in effect, extremely dangerous: a fragment the size of a pinhead can paralyze a lung "100,000 times more rapidly than the venom of a rattlesnake" and "10,000 times more rapidly than potassium cyanide." If absorbed in small doses, it can cause cancer of the bone or leukemia. In order to avoid these risks, plutonium is stored in airtight, sealed containers or barrels, resistant to the most violent impacts. It is never handled out in the open air, but in special caissons, resembling incubators in a maternity ward. The female laboratory technician, dressed like a nurse, puts her hands in huge neoprene gloves, fixed to port-holes imbedded in glass partitions. The air pressure inside is less than that of the room. In short, a whole system must be constructed so as to prevent even the tiniest particle of plutonium from escaping.

Karen Silkwood, last July, had, like other colleagues, been severely contaminated. For her, the Kermac plant's security system was a ... sieve!

Two months had passed by. On December 5, at 6:30 p.m. in room 135, the female laboratory technician had reduced plutonium capsules to powder. She removed her hands from the gloves, and allowed herself a break. For fifteen minutes she had been cleaning the element of its impurities by means of an ultrasonic device, inspected it under a microscope and had it X-rayed. Before leaving the laboratory, Karen passed through the gamma ray detector: her hands were contaminated.

She was sent to the infirmary and declared not in danger. But, in amazement, it was discovered that the young woman's apartment was also contaminated. The logical deduction was that the place had been used to store plutonium. "Kermac" immediately counterattacked. Without making any formal accusations, Kermac did not exclude the hypothesis that Miss Silkwood could have had some contact with plutonium thieves. Kermac does not care on behalf of whom. It is up to the FBI to find out. It is their job. Federal Agent Steve Olson was sent to Crescent on an assignment. He arrived there after Miss Silkwood's fatal accident.

In a hotel room, that same evening, Steve Olson, the FBI Agent, was bent over some files. His job was not only to determine if there had been a theft, but who would profit from it. Was it carried out in order to profit a nuclearly underdeveloped power? This is very unlikely. Chances are more likely that it was done in favor of a terrorist movement. The first file was that of "Kermac" which attacked its employee. The next file was that of the labor union which Wodka handed over, and which revealed twenty defects, more or less well founded on the part of the plant. A third file was one which had been drafted by a committee of six officials from the AEC (the American: Atomic Energy Commission) who had conducted an investigation of the plant's facilities. Finally, the last file contained the autopsy report which stated: "The traces of plutonium found in the young woman's liver and lungs are far too small to have caused sudden death." Steve Olson continued reading. The seven doctors, who had performed two autopsies, were unanimous in pointing out the presence of a large quantity of methaqualon -- a powerful hallucinatory drug which Karen could obtain with a doctor's prescription and which she used generously -- "the medicine could not make Miss Silkwood 'get high' to the extent of losing control of her car," stated Drew Stephens to the FBI Agent. "I knew her very well. We even smoked marijuana together. She knew very well how much of the stimulants as well as of the sedatives, to take. She never 'got high.' As far as methaqualon is concerned, her system was accustomed to it."

"Believe me, Inspector, the disappearance of the file which she was supposed to have turned over to us signifies that she was put away because she was becoming troublesome," said Wodka, insistingly, to the FBI Agent.

37

Steve Olson set out on the hunt. As the investigation progressed, the unknown and troubled person of a new Karen Silkwood gradually came to light. First of all, there was the ardent labor union member's sentimental life. At age twenty-eight, she was divorced, mother of three children, who were entrusted to the father. According to witnesses, she did not suffer from the divorce in any respect whatsoever. Then, Olson was astonished to learn that Karen divided her love between Drew Stephens and a girlfriend, a Cherrie Ellis, who had a passion for rodeos and always dressed like a man. This free love is calmly explained by Drew, who said: "Karen was, undoubtedly, due to her Indian blood, a rebel. She balked at the restraints of society."

This was a good breakthrough. Steve Olson continued his investigation into the dead woman's past. He went to the May Avenue Bank. Amiably the young woman's account was handed over to him: Karen was not a millionaire: far from it. She bought her car and motorcycle, as well as her stereo set, her television and her wardrobe on credit. This amounted to a total indebtedness of \$3,798 which Karen tried to stem, by borrowing money from various banks. For someone who earned only \$8,210 a year, this could be a motive to steal plutonium, according to Steve Olson.

But, Steve Olson wondered: how can anybody smuggle plutonium out of the plant, in spite of the guards, the dogs, the detection system which everyone leaving the Kermac premises must undergo? He questioned the personnel (136 employees) and discovered that the detection system is deceptive. First of all, resolute, armed commando teams, with good contacts inside the plant, could enter the premises of "Kermac" whenever they wanted to. But, over and above all, the detection system is fantastic. It would set off the alarm at the drop of a pin, to such an extent that the guard, tired of so many useless signals, would resort to setting it on again and would not search the person whose entry or exit had caused the alarm to go off. But, Steve Olson was not at the end of his surprises. He learned that, if each milligram of plutonium is rigorously accounted for, its manipulation involves losses of up to 2%, which the Atomic Energy Commission tolerates, without requesting that an investigation be made: 2% which undoubtedly not everyone loses. It seems unbelievable that an element as terrifying as plutonium, which is thought of as being guarded like the gold in Fort Knox, is guarded in such a loose manner. Unfortunately, however, this is the case.

37

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JEAN NOLI

caption under picture, middle of page 55:
Karen, found dead, contaminated by plutonium.

Mr. W. E. Wannall

F. S. Putman

1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
1 - Mr. A. E. Gebhardt
1 - Legal Counsel (Route
5/20/75

through for review)

1 - Mr. W. E. Wannall
1 - Mr. F. S. Putman
1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

KERR-MCGEE NUCLEAR CORPORATION,
CIMARRON FACILITY, CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA
AEA

By letter dated 5/16/75, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) advised that [redacted] Executive Director of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE) had requested copies of FBI reports in their files regarding Karen G. Silkwood (deceased). NRC requested Bureau permission to furnish [redacted] with investigative reports in this regard.

b6
b7C

As you will recall, the Bureau has had three investigations involving allegations and/or situations at Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, where Karen G. Silkwood, until her death in November, 1974, was employed. The following two cases actually concerned Silkwood: Unsubs; Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased); LARDA; OOJ; Bufile 159-4005 and Unsubs; Unauthorized Possession of Plutonium Resulting in the Contamination of Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased); [redacted] and [redacted] Kerr-McGee Corporation (KMC), Nuclear Products Division, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, AEA; Bufile 117-2702.

b6
b7C

A third case did not pertain to Silkwood but only to an incident at the Uranium Fuel Production Plant: Unsub; Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr-McGee Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, 12/18/74, AEA; Bufile 117-2898.

Karen G. Silkwood

In addition, by letter dated 5/4/75, to the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), Criminal Division, the Department was requested to review a letter received from the NRC dated 2/20/75, and its enclosures, and advise if the investigations under way at that time concerning KMC were a sufficient response to recent occurrences at the Corporation or if additional investigation should be instituted under provisions of the Atomic Energy Act (AEA) or Title 18, U. S. Code, Sections 1505 and 1510.

Enclosures

117-2701

1 - 159-4005

1 - 117-2898

1 - 117-2702

NOT RECORDED

167 JUN 9 1975

AJD:mjg

(10)

CONTINUED - OVER

Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Hannall
Re: Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation,
Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma
117-2701

It is believed that the request by NRC to furnish FBI reports to a Congressional committee should be denied in keeping with the Bureau policy of disseminating investigative reports only within the Executive Branch of Government and to refrain from disseminating them to Congress.

In addition, it is felt that the Department should be queried as to the results of its review of the information provided by letter dated 3/4/75, Supra.

b6
b7C

This matter has been coordinated with Supervisor [redacted] of the General Investigative Division and Deputy Assistant Director Jack E. Herington of Legal Counsel Division.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the attached letter to NRC be sent.
- 2) That the attached letter to the AAG, Criminal Division, be sent.

1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
1 - Mr. R. E. Gebhardt
1 - Legal Counsel
(Route through for review,

May 22, 1975

Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division

Director, FBI

1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall
1 - Mr. F. S. Putman
1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

KERR-MC GEE NUCLEAR CORPORATION,
CIMARRON FACILITY, CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA
AEA

Enclosed herewith is a Xerox copy of a letter from
[redacted] Executive Director for Operations, Nuclear
Regulatory Commission (NRC), dated May 16, 1975, as well as
a Xerox copy of my reply thereto.

b6
b7C

By letter dated March 13, 1975, you were advised
that the FBI has in the past refrained from discussing
pending cases which have the potential for Federal prosecution
and, further, that I would so advise the General Accounting
Office (GAO) of this. It will be recalled at that time,
the GAO had requested to meet with FBI representatives
concerning ongoing investigations centered at captioned
facility and this request was denied.

In addition, by letter dated March 4, 1975, the
Department was requested to review letter from the NRC dated
February 20, 1975, along with its enclosures, to determine if
the investigations currently under way by the Bureau are a
sufficient response to occurrences at Kerr-McGee or if
additional investigation should be instituted under the
provisions of the Atomic Energy Act (AEA) or Title 18,
U. S. Code, Sections 1505 and 1510. The results of your
review in this regard would be appreciated.

Enclosures (2)

117-2701

① - 159-4005
1 - 117-2696
1 - 117-2702

AJD:mjg
(12)

157-4005-
NOT RECORDED

167 JUN 9 1975

SEE NOTE PAGE TWO

ORIGINAL FILED IN

pyd

LETTER TO YELLOW

JUN 10 1975

Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division

NOTE:

See memorandum F. S. Putman to Mr. W. R. Wannall dated 5/20/75, captioned "Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, AA," prepared by AJD:mjg.

- 1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
1 - Mr. R.E. Gebhardt
1 - Legal Counsel
(Route through for review)
1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall

May 22, 1975

- 1 - Mr. F. S. Putman
1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin

Executive Director for Operations
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

b6
b7C

Dear [redacted]:

Reference is made to your letter dated May 16, 1975, wherein you advise that [redacted] Executive Director of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE), has requested of you copies of FBI reports pertaining to Karen G. Silkwood (deceased).

b6
b7C

As you are aware, the FBI has provided you with investigative reports concerning investigations into certain allegations and occurrences at Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, where Karen G. Silkwood, until the time of her death, was employed. These investigations have the potential for criminal prosecutions.

The dissemination of investigative reports in pending cases is made to the proper agencies within the Executive Branch of Government. This Bureau has made it a practice in the past to refrain from disseminating reports of ongoing cases to Congressional committees. Therefore, it is requested that you not furnish FBI investigative reports relating to Silkwood to the JCAE. You may wish to advise the JCAE that any request for information concerning Silkwood and these related investigations should properly be addressed to [redacted] Acting Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, U. S. Department of Justice.

b6
b7C

117-2701

- ① - 159-4005
1 - 117-2696
1 - 117-2702

AJD:mjg
(11)

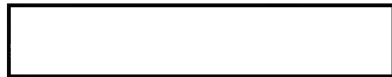
51 JUN 10 1975 DUPLICATE YELLOW

SEE NOTE PAGE TWO

159-4005
NOT RECORDED
167 JUN 9 1975

ajd

b6
b7C



For your information, I have taken the liberty of referring a copy of your letter along with a copy of this reply to the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division.

Sincerely yours,

Clarence M. Kelloy
Director

NOTE:

See memorandum F. S. Putman to Mr. W. R. Wannall dated 5/20/75, captioned "Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, AEA," prepared by AJD:njg.

Assoc. Dir. _____
 Dep. AD Adm. _____
 Dep. AD Inv. 4-1-75
 Asst. Dir.:
 Admin. _____
 Comp. Syst. 4-1-75
 Ext. Affairs 4-1-75
 Files & Com. _____
 Gen. Inv. 4-1-75
 Ident. _____
 Inspection 4-1-75
 Intell. 4-1-75
 Laboratory _____
 Plan. & Eval. _____
 Spec. Inv. _____
 Training _____
 Legal Coun. _____
 Telephone Rm. _____
 Director Sec'y _____

Probe of Atom Worker's Crash

FBI: No Foul Play in Death

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The FBI says it found no evidence of foul play in the death of Karen Silkwood, a worker at Kerr-McGee's Crescent plutonium plant who died in a car wreck Nov. 13.

The FBI findings back up an Oklahoma Highway Patrol investigation which discounted allegations Miss Silkwood's car was forced off the road.

Miss Silkwood died when her car crashed into a culvert near Crescent. She reportedly was en route to a meeting with a New York Times reporter and a union representative to discuss safety conditions at the plant.

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union requested the Justice Department investigate the death.

"We have decided that there seem to be no federal violations" in connection with Miss Silkwood's death, Robert L. Stevenson, a Justice Department spokesman, said. "It does appear to be an accident."

An FBI spokesman here said there was "no mystery" about the crash and referred to it as "a closed book."

Miss Silkwood was contaminated by plutonium the

week before the accident. The day of the crash, she reportedly was carrying altered inspector's records and documents alleging poor safety standards at the plant.

An FBI spokesman said that although foul play had been ruled out in the accident, the FBI was continuing to investigate the possibility that persons connected with the plant illegally possessed plutonium.

b6
b7C

159-4005-A-

NOT RECORDED

b6 182 AUG 5 1975
b7C

Deleted Copy Sent [redacted]
 by Letter Dated 5-10-76 Emr
 Per FOIPA Request re K. Silkwood

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 7-1-85 BY 9NLS-01-JD

The Washington Post _____
 Washington Star-News A-2
 Daily News (New York) _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The National Observer _____
 The Los Angeles Times _____

MAY 3 1975

AUG 5 1975

File in

159-4005

5/3/75

UNRECORDED COPY FILED IN 117-2696-A

20 AUG 18 1975
 117-2702
 117-2696

117-2696-A

117-2702-A

May 21, 1975

OT REC-63

159-4005-38

ST 114

[Redacted]
National Public Radio
2025 M Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

b6
b7C

Dear Miss Newman:

This is to acknowledge your recently received
Freedom of Information Act request.

Due to the increased interest generated by the
amendments to the Freedom of Information Act, it is neces-
sary to advise you that an extension of time is needed to
process your request.

You may be assured that every feasible effort
will be made to comply with your request within 25
working days and you will be advised of the results as
soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

C. M. Kelley

Clarence M. Kelley
Director

1 - The Deputy Attorney General - Enclosure
Attention: [Redacted]

~~xxxx Bufile 62-115530 (FOI-DEPT-IRS)~~

b6
b7C

kmb:nlm 6(5)

MAIL ROOM ☒

TELETYPE UNIT ☐

1 - Legal Counsel
 1 - Mr. E. M. Schardt
 (Attn: Mr. Rothman)
 1 - Mr. W. H. Wassell
 1 - Mr. A. J. Duffin
 June 3, 1976

159-4005-

Director
 Citizenship-Legislative Department
 Civil, Criminal and Atomic Work
 International Union
 1120 18th Street, Northwest
 Washington, D. C. 20036

b6
 b7C

Dear [REDACTED]

Reference is made to your letter dated May 31, 1976, wherein you advise that the National Regulatory Commission (NRC) wrote to this Bureau subsequent to January 21, 1976, regarding the violations of the rights of Mrs. Walter employees in Crescent, Oklahoma.

For your information, [REDACTED] Acting Executive Director for Operations, NRC, by letter dated February 20, 1976, replied your letter of January 21, 1976, alleging a violation of an NRC regulation in addition to other enclosures.

By letter dated March 4, 1976, [REDACTED] letter along with its enclosures was forwarded to the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), Criminal Division. To date, no decision has been forthcoming from the Department as to whether or not investigation should be conducted. You may wish to address any additional correspondence concerning this matter directly to the AAG, Criminal Division, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D. C.

For your information, I have taken the liberty of referring a copy of your letter with its enclosures along with a copy of this reply to the AAG, Criminal Division.

Sincerely yours,
 E. M. Kelley

Clarence M. Kelley
 Director

ORIGINAL FILED IN

b6
 b7C

Adm. Dir. _____
 Dep. AD Adm. _____
 Dep. AD Inv. _____
 Asst. Dir. _____
 Admin. _____
 Comp. Syst. _____
 Ext. Affairs _____
 Files & Com. _____
 Gen. Inv. _____
 Ident. _____
 Insp. _____
 Intell. _____
 Lab. _____
 Plan. & Eval. _____
 Spec. Inv. _____

AD-Inst. 10 MAILED 1
 JUN 3 1976

336
 54 JUL 3 1976

TELETYPE UNIT

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NOTE:

By letter dated 2/20/75, NED requested FBI investigation concerning allegations made by Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers under the criminal provisions of Title 42, USC, Section 2484(a)(1). At that time, Bureau had three investigations under way concerning occurrences at Kerr McGee Facility and by letter dated 3/4/75, Department requested to advise if investigations under way sufficient or if additional investigation warranted.

On 5/22/75, a letter was directed to the Department concerning the Kerr McGee Nuclear Corporation cases and in that letter the Department was requested to submit the results of its review concerning the 3/4/75 letter.

F B I

Date: 6/4/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority)

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)
 FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (P)
 UNSUB;
 KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED)
 LMRDA - OOJ
 OO - Oklahoma City

ReButelcal to Okla. City 5/8/75.

For information of the Bureau, two of the three persons who were involved in initially discovering the deceased car wreck 11/13/75, have been located and interviewed. These individuals are as follows:

[redacted] Okla., and his 14 year-old brother-in-law, [redacted] Okla.

b6
b7C

[redacted] was the person who initially observed the wrecked vehicle.

REC-56

[redacted] and [redacted] were driving about one-quarter mile behind [redacted] formerly of Garver, Okla, who passed the wrecked car without noticing it.

[redacted] has moved from [redacted] to [redacted] and presently is employed on a job for a yet undetermined company in Kansas which keeps him on the road the bulk of the time. Arrangements are being made to make contact with [redacted] on his first return to Okla. City.

b6
b7CLEADS:

JUN 9 1975

OKLAHOMA CITY

AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA. Will locate and interview [redacted] and thereafter submit closing LHM.

b6
b7C

2- Bureau

2- Oklahoma City

LJO/psh

51 JUN 7 1975 Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

June 24, 1975

[Redacted]
National Public Radio
2025 M Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

b6
b7C

Dear [Redacted]:

This is in response to your recently received Freedom of Information Act request.

For your information, the documents you requested concerning the death of Karen Silkwood are exempt from disclosure as they are investigatory records compiled for law enforcement purposes, and the release of these records would interfere with enforcement proceedings.

Their release would also deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, disclose the identity of a confidential source, and disclose investigative techniques and procedures. These documents are further exempt from disclosure since they are inter-agency and intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency. These exemptions are pursuant to Title 5, United States Code, Section 552 (b) (7) (D), (E), (C), (D), (E), and (b) (5).

MAILED 7 JUN 25 1975 FBI

ST-104 REC-63 157-40540

The only other documents the FBI has concerning Karen Silkwood are various newspaper clippings and magazine articles. We are not enclosing copies of these documents since they are public source material and we assume you are aware of their existence. However, we will forward copies of these articles upon your request.

1 - The Deputy Attorney General
Attn: [Redacted]

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.:
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Files & Com. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

MAIL ROOM ☐

TELETYPE UNIT ☐

SEE NOTE PAGE TWO . . .

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b7C

b6
b7C

[REDACTED]

You have thirty days from receipt of this letter to appeal to the Attorney General from any denial contained herein. Appeals should be directed in writing to the Attorney General (Attention: Freedom of Information Appeals Unit), Washington, D. C. 20530. The envelope and the letter should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Appeal" or "Information Appeal." Following the Attorney General's decision, judicial review is available in the district of your residence or principal place of business, or in the District of Columbia, where the records are situated.

Sincerely yours,

C. M. Kelley
Clarence M. Kelley
Director

NOTE: Response coordinated with [REDACTED] Division 5, who advised on 6/6/75 that our investigation into this matter is continuing. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Division 6, advised SA [REDACTED] FOIA Section, on 6/17/75, that criminal investigation in this matter is continuing.

b6
b7C

F B I

Date: 7/25/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)
FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (P)
SUBJECT: UNSUBS;
KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED);
LMRDA; OOJ
OO: Oklahoma City

Re Oklahoma City letter to the Bureau, dated 5/9/75.

Enclosed for the Bureau are six copies of LHM dated and captioned as above. One copy of LHM furnished USA, Oklahoma City.

LEADOKLAHOMA CITYview AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA. Will locate and inter-b6
b7c

② - Bureau (Enc. - 6)
2 - Oklahoma City
LJO:jgs
(4)

ENCLOSURE

EX 104

REC-56

21 JUL 28 1975

Deleted Copy Sent

by Letter Dated 5-10-76
Per FOIPA Request K. G. Silkwoodb6
b7c

SIX

Approved: 1975
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

July 25, 1975

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Unknown Subjects;
Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased)
LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND
DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1959; OBSTRUCTION
OF JUSTICE

Set forth below are interviews with [redacted]
[redacted] and [redacted] who were among the first
individuals on the scene of Silkwood's fatal accident
November 13, 1974. Also set forth is interview with [redacted]
[redacted] who had previously been interviewed in regard
to this case.

b6

b7C

159-4005-
ENCLOSURE

41

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 6/13/75

[redacted] furnished the following information:

b6
b7C

He is 14 years old, having been born [redacted] at [redacted]. He presently is in the 9th grade and attends school in [redacted] Oklahoma.

Sometime in mid-November, 1974, the exact date unrecalled, he was working with his brother-in-law, [redacted] for [redacted] who was remodeling his house in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. At this particular time, [redacted] was living in [redacted] Oklahoma, and he was living with [redacted].

He does not remember the exact time that they left Oklahoma City enroute to [redacted] but darkness had fallen and they had worked later than usual that particular night. [redacted] was going back to [redacted] Oklahoma, where he lived at that time and was driving a pickup truck.

b6
b7C

[redacted] was driving a flat bed truck and following along behind enroute to [redacted]. He was kind of tired and was dozing as [redacted] drove down the road. Somewhere south of Crescent, Oklahoma, [redacted] stopped the truck and said he thought he had seen a wrecked car in the ditch.

[redacted] blinked his lights at [redacted] who stopped, turned around, and started back.

In the meantime [redacted] turned the truck around and shined his headlights on the ditch where they could see a small car badly damaged laying in a culvert.

b6
b7C

It was very quiet at the wreck and he and [redacted] had some discussion as to whether or not there was someone still in the car. At first it appeared that the car was empty, but he noticed something sticking out of the windshield, possibly a hand. He told [redacted] this, and he looked at the car a little closer and saw that there appeared to be a girl in the front seat of the car.

Interviewed on 6/3/75 at [redacted] Oklahoma File # Oklahoma City 159-45
by SA [redacted] b6
b7C Date dictated 6/9/75

By then [] had come back, and they had told [] about the wreck, and he had turned around and gone back north to call the Highway Patrol.

b6
b7c

A carload of black people, all of whom appeared to be drunk, briefly stopped at the scene shortly after they got there. They asked what was going on and were told that the Highway Patrol was coming and they took off at a high rate of speed.

Shortly thereafter, a couple of men stopped at the scene, looked at the car, and said that they thought they worked with the person who owned the car. One of these two men drove off to call the Sheriff.

About fifteen minutes after [] left, the Highway Patrol got on the scene and almost immediately thereafter an ambulance came.

He and [] went down in the ditch and helped turn over the car. He also helped to use a power tool to pry the car door open so they could get the girl out of the car.

b6
b7c

He noticed that there was an "antique looking" purse laying on the ground and the contents of the purse were scattered about in the immediate vicinity. He noticed small little slips of different colored paper and a pack of cigarettes which appeared to have come from the purse. He did not notice any cosmetics. He did not see any notebooks, folders, or any other type of larger pieces of paper in the vicinity of the wreck.

He saw the wrecked car's tire tracks in the ditch where it looked like the car had just gone straight down the ditch for one quarter mile or so and headed right into the culvert.

The entire front end of the car was "wiped out" and the left front door was severely dented and crushed in. He does not know what the extent of the damage was to the rear of the car.

OC 159-45

3

He, [redacted], and [redacted] left the wreck scene after the ambulance left and before the wrecker moved the car from the ditch.

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b7c

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 6/13/75

[redacted]
Oklahoma, furnished the following information:

b6
b7C

He previously was employed by [redacted] who formerly operated a trailer sales lot known as [redacted] which was located just south of [redacted] Oklahoma. [redacted] business was a side venture and [redacted] principal employment was with [redacted]. This company is involved in the manufacture of stock and grain trailers.

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b7C

He presently is employed by [redacted] and his residence phone number is [redacted]. He is in the process of moving his residence in [redacted] and will maintain the same [redacted] phone number. His new residence is [redacted].

On the evening of November 13, 1974, he was working for [redacted]. At that time [redacted] was in the process of moving from [redacted] Oklahoma, to [redacted] Oklahoma, and was remodeling his new house in [redacted]. He and his 14 year old brother-in-law, [redacted] had worked all day the day of November 13, 1974 for [redacted] in [redacted] and were "running about four hours late." At this particular time he lived in [redacted] Oklahoma, and his brother-in-law [redacted] was living in [redacted] with him.

They ate a hurried supper after finishing their work day and were enroute from [redacted] to [redacted] via U. S. Highway 74. [redacted] was driving ahead of them in a pickup truck. [redacted] was enroute to [redacted].

b6
b7C

As [redacted] recalls, it was about 7:45 p.m. when they were in the vicinity of the intersection of State Highway 33 and 74. It was very dark at this time. [redacted] was approximately one quarter mile ahead of him. He was driving a one ton flat bed truck and his brother-in-law [redacted] was riding in the cab beside him. [redacted] was dozing.

Interviewed on 6/3/75 at [redacted] Oklahoma File # Oklahoma City 159-45
by SA [redacted] Date dictated 6/9/75

b6
b7C
Date dictated

He had driven the road on numerous occasions and had driven the road daily for the previous two-week period and, therefore, was most familiar with the road and the roadside conditions. He also had considerable experience as a wrecker driver and he prides himself in being little more alert than the average person concerning the likelihood of occurrence of automobile wrecks. At a point about a mile and a half south of the intersection of State Highway 33 and 74, he caught a light reflection out of the corner of his eye from the east side of the road, which to him suggested the possibility of a car having gone off in a ditch. He slowed down and stopped, having passed this point. As he came to a stop, he blinked his headlights several times which caused [] who was ahead of him, to also stop.

b6
b7c

He backed the truck up south past the point where he thought he saw something in the ditch and turned the truck so the headlights would shine off the road. He then saw there was a small white foreign car laying on its side in a culvert which passed under the road. The truck lights were shining over the wreck rather than right down on it and he had difficulty observing the wreck at this point.

He told [] to get out of the truck and holler down and see if there was anyone still in the car. [] did get out of the truck and called out, but there was no response from the wrecked car. [] told him he thought he saw a hand sticking out of the broken windshield, and [] said he thought there was someone trapped in the car.

b6
b7c

About this time [] had gotten back to the wreck location and he and [] had by this time verified that there was someone trapped in the car. They so informed [] who immediately turned around and headed north to call the Highway Patrol.

b6
b7c

Shortly thereafter a carload of drunken Negroes stopped at the wreck scene. When they were informed that the Highway Patrol was coming, the Negroes "took off."

Shortly thereafter a white male wearing a hardhat and driving a 1967 brown Ford stationwagon passed the wreck

from the north, when about one quarter mile south turned around and came back to the wreck. This man asked if they needed any help and he told the man that they had already called the Highway Patrol. The man thereafter left without getting out of his car.

About that time, two white males approaching the wreck scene from the south drove up and stopped. They got out and looked at the wreck from a distance and one of them said he thought he recognized the car. These two individuals identified themselves as being employees of the Kerr McGee Company and working at the Nuclear Plant a couple of miles north of the wreck site. One of the men said he thought that the wrecked car belonged to a girl who also worked at the plant. The other man got into his car and also drove off to call the police or the Highway Patrol. The man who recognized the car stayed at the scene.

About five or ten minutes after [] got back from making his phone call, a Highway Patrol Trooper arrived on the scene. It did not seem that it took long at all for the Trooper to get there as only from ten to fifteen minutes elapsed between the time that [] left to report the wreck and the Trooper got there. An ambulance got on the scene about four or five minutes after the Trooper arrived and a wrecker arrived on the scene before they completed loading the girl who was trapped in the car into the ambulance.

b6
b7c

He stayed up on the shoulder when the Highway Patrol Trooper and [] and [] helped turn the car over and helped the ambulance attendants get the girl out of the car.

He had previously noted that the girl's purse was laying on the ground between the car and the culvert and and he pointed this fact out to the Trooper who said he would pick it up.

He could not clearly see the entire wrecked car but it appeared to him that the front end of the car was totally demolished. He did not observe the back end of the car; therefore, he does not know what the extent of damage was to the rear of the car.

OC 159-45

4

Almost immediately after the ambulance departed, he, [] and [] left the scene. This was before the wrecker had removed the car from the ditch.

b6
b7c

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 5/9/75

[redacted]
Oklahoma, when contacted in regard to a different matter,
furnished the following information:

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b7C

As he previously indicated, he did not see
KAREN SILKWOOD after the time that she left the union
meeting at Crescent, Oklahoma, at 7:00 pm, November 13,
1974.

He never saw KAREN arrive after that time.
He did not follow her home and he did not discover the car
wreck in which she died later on the evening of November
13, 1974.

He first learned about KAREN's death at
around 9:00 am, November 14, 1974.

Other than the notebook, which he previously
mentioned, he does not know what kind of documentation she
may have had concerning the fuel rod quality control
allegations. He has no information concerning any manila
folder that SILKWOOD may have had in her possession on
November 13, 1974.

Interviewed on 5/5/75 [redacted] Oklahoma b6 Oklahoma City 159-45
by SA's [redacted] and [redacted] b7C
Date dictated 5/8/75

July 15, 1975

REC 27

News Editor
WCOL Radio Station
195 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

b6
b7C

Dear [REDACTED]:

In response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding a Justice Department investigation of [REDACTED] or of any other reporters involved in reporting on the death of Karen Silkwood, please be advised that no such investigation(s) was conducted. Any mention of reporters during the investigations of the incident at Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, Crescent, Oklahoma, was purely incidental.

b6
b7C

A search of our central records failed to reflect that the FBI received a request from Senator Bartlett concerning this matter. Certainly, no investigation was initiated at his request.

The investigations concerning Kerr-McGee are continuing and any documents associated with those investigations are being withheld as their release would interfere with enforcement proceedings. The release of these documents is withheld pursuant to the FOIA, Title 5, United States Code, Section 552 (b) (7) (A).

Additionally the release of any documents in which reporters were mentioned is withheld pursuant to Subsections (b) (7) (C) and (D) as release would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, and disclose the identity of persons cooperating in an official investigation with an implied assurance of confidentiality.

You have thirty days from receipt of this letter to appeal to the Attorney General from any denial contained herein. Appeals should be directed in writing to the Attorney General (Attention: Freedom of Information Appeals Unit), Washington, D. C. 20530. The envelope and the letter should

1 - The Deputy Attorney General - Enclosure

Attention: [REDACTED]

b6
b7C

SEE NOTE NEXT PAGE

MAIL ROOM ☒

TELETYPE UNIT ☐

GPO 954-546

[REDACTED]

b6
b7C

be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Appeal" or "Information Appeal." Following the Attorney General's decision, judicial review is available in the district of your residence or principal place of business, or in the District of Columbia, where the records are situated.

Sincerely yours,

C. M. Kelley
Clarence M. Kelley
Director

NOTE: Response was coordinated with [REDACTED]
Criminal Division, Dept. of Justice. [REDACTED] b6
Division 5, advised on 6/6/75, that our investigation into [REDACTED] b7C
the Silkwood death is continuing. [REDACTED]
Div. 6, advised on 6/17/75, that criminal investigation into
the Silkwood death is continuing. This request was confined
to information relating to [REDACTED] or any other reporters
involved in reporting on her death only.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
COMMUNICATIONS SECTIONTransmitted by Facsimile **AIRTEXT** AUG 06 1975**TELETYPE**To: DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005) Date: 8/6/75
ATTENTION: ROOM 5152JENFrom: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (P) b6 Time: Transmitted -
b7CSubject: UNSUB;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
LMRDA - OOJ
OO: Oklahoma City☐ Fingerprint Photo ☐ Fingerprint Record ☐ Map ☐ Newspaper clipping ☐ Photograph☐ Artists Conception☐ (6 min) ☐ (4 min)

Special handling instructions:

Oklahoma City memorandum of
SA [redacted] dated 5/8/75.b6
b7C

EX-105

REC-18

159-4005-44

6-642

159-4005

Deleted Copy Sent [redacted]

b6
b7CPer FOIA Request 5-10-76 [redacted]
Per FOIA Request [redacted]

AUG 18 1975

Assoc. Dir.	_____
Dep.-A.D. Adm.	_____
Dep.-A.D. Inv.	_____
Asst. Dir.:	_____
Admin.	_____
Comp. Svst.	_____
Ext. Affairs	_____
Files & Com.	_____
Gen. Inv.	_____
Ident.	_____
Inspection	_____
Intell.	_____
Laboratory	_____
Plan. & Eval.	_____
Spec. Inv.	_____
Training	_____
Legal Coun.	_____
Telephone Rm.	_____
Director Sec'y	_____

SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) - P -

5/8/75

SA [REDACTED]

b6
b7C

UNSUB;
KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED)
LMSDA - OOJ
OO: Oklahoma City

Rebuletal OK 5/8/75.

[REDACTED] Unit Chief, Labor Unit,
FBIHQ, telephonically advised that the Department was
requesting that the first person or persons to discover
the SILKWOOD wreck be identified and interviewed with
emphasis on their observations at accident scene re any
documents or papers.

b6
b7C

[REDACTED] requested that a closing LHM be
prepared when this particular investigation is completed.
[REDACTED] indicated that he was attaching no particular
urgency to reporting the results of this investigation.

Investigation previously determined the first
persons on the scene are as follows:

[REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Oklahoma
[REDACTED] Oklahoma
[REDACTED] Oklahoma.

b6
b7C

SA [REDACTED] will locate and interview these
individuals listed above in accordance with Bureau
instructions.

② - Oklahoma City

LID/vb
(2)

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 13 1975	
FBI - OKLAHOMA CITY	

159-4005-1

159-45-145

"GREAT AS ORIGINAL"

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

AUG 25 1975

TELETYPE

FD-445 (10-28-71)

Assoc. Dir.
Dep. A.D. Admin.
Dep. A.D. Inv.
Asst. Dir.:
Admin.
Comp. Syst.
Ext. Affairs
Files & Com.
Gen. Inv.
Ident.
Inspection
Intell.
Laboratory
Plan. & Insp.
Spec. Inv.
Training
Legal Coun.
Telephone Rm.
Director's Sec'y

Transmit attached by Facsimile - PLAINTEXT

Priority URGENT

To: DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)

ATTENTION: [REDACTED]

From: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (P)

b6
b7C

Date: 8/25/75

Room 5152JRH

Time Transmitted -

Subject: UNSUB;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)

LEADA - OOJ

OO: Oklahoma City

☐ Fingerprint Photo

☐ Fingerprint Record

☐ Map

☒ Newspaper clipping

☐ Photograph

☐ Artists Conception

☐ Other

☐ (1 min)

☐ (1 min)

Special Handling Instructions

Deleted Copy Sent [REDACTED]

2. Letter Dated 5-10-76 [REDACTED]

Per MOIPA Request [REDACTED]

b6
b7C

Approved: [Signature]

ST-1

REC 20 / 59 4005-45

20 AUG 26 1975

331

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

SILKWOOD CASE CITED

Women's Group Calls for Strike

By Associated Press

A lot of husbands could be doing the housework, taking care of the kids and fixing the meals October 29, if the National Organization of Women (NOW) gets the results it wants.

NOW is calling for a general, nationwide strike by women that day, according to NOW spokesman Bernice Friedlander.

The purpose of the strike, said Friedlander Friday in a telephone interview from Washington, is "to focus national attention on the inequalities in the society, and the fact that women are not paid equally, women are not treated equally in employment, women's rights are not given the same respect as other peoples' rights before the law, in educational institutions, in the political structure, and so on."

Final details will be worked out during NOW's national convention in Philadelphia, Oct. 24-27.

NOW is asking women to walk off their jobs both in and out of the home, to withhold all monetary support of the system, not to volunteer anything and not to baby-sit.

NOW is also planning a number of actions next Tuesday, the 55th anniversary of women's suffrage, "to protest violence abuse against women in all phases of society," according to Friedlander.

However, much of the national focus will be on Washington, where NOW members will stage a candlelight vigil from the Ellipse to the Justice Department, and will formally call for a reopening of an investigation into the death of a woman plutonium plant worker in Oklahoma last year.

The woman, Karen Silkwood, 26, died in what was termed a mysterious auto accident last summer.

At the time of the accident, Miss Silkwood was reportedly driving from Crescent, to Oklahoma City to confer with union leaders and other officials on conditions at the Kerr-McGee Plutonium plant near Crescent.

Miss Silkwood had voiced several complaints about what she said were unsafe practices at the plant. She said workers were being unnecessarily exposed to radiation.

An Atomic Energy Commission report on the Kerr-McGee investigation released in January indicated Karen Silkwood was contaminated outside the plant, possibly by plutonium intentionally taken from the firm's Cimarron nuclear plant.

The AEC report concluded that the Kerr-McGee facility could improve its control of worker exposures, its hygiene precaution program and monitoring of employee exposures. By April it gave a stamp of approval to the Crescent facility, saying possible sources of contamination had been removed.

After the accident, Miss Silkwood's union alleged foul play was involved in the crash, but the Oklahoma Highway Patrol ruled the mishap an accident. An FBI investigation found no evidence of foul play.

An autopsy indicated the presence of radioactive material in Miss Silkwood's body, but officials said it was not sufficient to cause death. The autopsy report said part of the radioactive material could have been ingested.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

1 The Daily Oklahoman
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Date: August 23, 1975

Edition: Morning

Author:

Editor: Charles L. Bennett

Title: National Organization of Women (NOW)

Character:

or

Classification: 159-45

Submitting Office: Okla. City

☐ Being Investigated

159-4005-45

4/5

"The FBI has evidence that they have not pursued," said Friedlander. "We know she was poisoned, but more than that, there has to be further tests."

Friedlander said NOW will come forward Tuesday with a "very complete" life of information on what has and hasn't been probed in the case.

NR773 OC PLAIN

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

AUG 23 1975

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132PM NITEL AUGUST 23, 1975 RLH

TO DIRECTOR (159-4775)

TELETYPE

PHILADELPHIA

FROM OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45)(P)

UNSUBS; KAREN G. SILKWOOD (DECEASED); LMRDA; OOJ.

OO: OKLAHOMA CITY.

THE AUGUST 23, 1975, EDITION OF "THE DAILY OKLAHOMAN", A DAILY NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA., ON PAGE ONE HAD AN ARTICLE CAPTIONED "WOMEN'S GROUP CALLS FOR STRIKE" SUBCAPTIONED "SILKWOOD CASE SITED" WITH AN ASSOCIATED PRESS DATELINE (NO CITY INDICATED). THE ARTICLE IN PART INDICATED THAT THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN (NOW) IS CALLING FOR A NATIONAL STRIKE OCTOBER 29, 1975, ACCORDING TO NOW SPOKESPERSON BERNICE FRIEDLANDER. FINAL DETAILS FOR STRIKE TO BE WORKED OUT AT NOW'S NATIONAL CONVENTION IN PHILADELPHIA OCTOBER 24-27, 1975.

REC-30

159-4005-46

ARTICLE INDICATED NOW IS ASKING WOMEN TO WALK OFF THEIR JOBS, BOTH IN AND OUT OF HOMES, TO WITHHOLD ALL MONETARY SUPPORT OF THE SYSTEM, NOT TO VOLUNTEER ANYTHING AND NOT TO BABYSIT.

NOW IS PLANNING A NUMBER OF ACTIONS AUGUST 26, 1975,

END PAGE ONE

message relayed
to US Secret Service
8/25/75 11:10 AM
JH/pms
SEP 1 1975

Dir. _____
Dep. Dir. _____
Dep. Dir. Inv. _____
Dir. _____
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Files & Com. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

b6
b7c

THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE "TO PROTEST VIOLENCE
ABUSE AGAINST WOMEN IN ALL PHASES OF SOCIETY." MUCH OF THE
NOW NATIONAL FOCUS WILL BE IN WASHINGTON (AUGUST 26, 1975)
WHERE NOW MEMBERS WILL STAGE A CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FROM THE
ELIPSE TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND WILL FORMALLY CALL FOR A
REOPENING OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF KAREN
SILKWOOD.

FRIEDLANDER WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "THE FBI HAS EVIDENCE
THEY HAVE NOT PURSUED. WE KNOW SHE WAS POISONED, BUT MORE
THAN THAT, THERE HAS TO BE FURTHER TESTS." FRIEDLANDER
INDICATED THAT NOW WOULD COME FORWARD ON AUGUST 26 WITH A
VERY COMPLETE FILE OF INFORMATION ON WHAT HAS AND HAS NOT
BEEN PROBED IN THE CASE.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

FOR INFORMATION OF PHILADELPHIA, INFORMATION CONCERNING
SILKWOOD WAS PREVIOUSLY FURNISHED IN CASE ENTITLED "UNSUB;
THREAT TO BOMB PHILADELPHIA, PA., MARCH 6, 1975, BT, OO:
PHILADELPHIA", PHILADELPHIA FILE 174-1353.

OKLAHOMA CITY IS FURNISHING ABOVE TO BUREAU FOR INFORMA-
TION PURPOSES NOTING THAT THERE WILL BE A DEMONSTRATION
END PAGE TWO

PAGE THREE

OC 159-45

AUGUST 26, 1975, AT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

PHILADELPHIA AT PHILADELPHIA. WILL REMAIN ALERT FOR
ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING ADDITIONAL DETAILS REGARDING
AUGUST 26, 1975, VIGIL RE SILKWOOD CASE.

OKLAHOMA CITY - SAME LEAD AS PHILADELPHIA.

END

SMD FBIHQ CLR FOR ONE TELS

46

MESSAGE RELAY

KE

Transmit in ☒ Plaintext
☐ Code

Via Teletype the Attached

☐ Immediate
☒ Urgent
☐ Nitel

Message

Date 8/25/75

From: Director, FBI

To: SACs:

To: Legats:

To: RUEADWW/ ☐ The President

☐ The Vice President

☐ White House Situation Room

☐ Attn:

☐ Attn:

D

RUEBWJA/ ☐ Attorney General

☐ Deputy Attorney General

☐ Attn: Analysis and Evaluation Unit

RUEBWJA/ ☐ Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division

RUEBWJA/ ☐ Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division

☐ Attn: Internal Security Section

☐ Attn: General Crimes Section

RUEABND/ ☐ Drug Enforcement Administration

RUEANAT/ ☐ National Aeronautics & Space Adm.

RUEBWJA/ ☐ Immigration and Naturalization Service

RUEOIAA/ ☐ National Security Agency

(DIRNSA/NSOC (Attn: SOO))

RUEBWJA/ ☐ U. S. Marshal's Service

RUEBDUA/ ☐ Department of the Air Force (AFOSI)

RUEOLKN/ ☐ Naval Investigative Service

RUEACSI/ ☐ Department of the Army

RUEAUSA/ ☐ U. S. Postal Service (if Classified)

(Use RUEVDFS if Unclassified)

RUEAIA/ ☐ Director, CIA

RUEHSE/ ☒ U. S. Secret Service (PID)

RUEBJGA/ ☐ Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard

RUEHOC/ ☐ Secretary of State

RUEKJCS/ ☐ Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

RUEBJGA/ ☐ Department of Transportation

RHEGGTN/ ☐ Energy Research and Development Administration

Attn: Director of Security

RUEOGBA/ ☐ Federal Aviation Administration

ST. 109

AUG 26 1975

Assoc. Dir. _____

Dep. AD Adm. _____

Dep. AD Inv. _____

Asst. Dir.:

Admin. _____

Comp. Syst. _____

Ext. Affairs _____

Files & Com. _____

Gen. Inv. _____

Ident. _____

Inspection _____

Intell. _____

Laboratory _____

Legal Coun. _____

Plan. & Eval. _____

Spec. Inv. _____

Training _____

Telephone Rm. _____

Director Sec'y _____

☐ Top Secret

☐ Secret

Classification:

☒ Confidential

☐ Unclassified

UNSUBS, HAREN G. SPOKWOOD (DECEASED);

MRDA: OOO

MAIL ROOM ☐

TELETYPE UNIT ☒

Foreign Liaison Unit

☐ Route through for review

☐ Cleared telephonically

with _____

AUG 25 1975

TELETYPE

KE

PAGE THREE

OC 159-45

~~AUGUST 26, 1975, AT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.~~

~~PHILADELPHIA AT PHILADELPHIA. WILL REMAIN ALERT FOR
ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING ADDITIONAL DETAILS REGARDING
AUGUST 26, 1975, VIGIL RE SILKWOOD CASE.~~

~~OKLAHOMA CITY SAME LEAD AS PHILADELPHIA.~~

END

~~GAD FBIHQ CLR FOR ONE TELS~~

21

F B I

Date: 9/2/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via **AIRTEL** _____
(Priority)

Assoc. Dir.	_____
Dep.-A.D.-Adm.	_____
Dep.-A.D.-Inv.	_____
Asst. Dir.:	_____
Admin.	_____
Comp. Syst.	_____
Ext. Affairs	_____
Files & Com.	_____
Gen. Inv.	_____
Ident.	_____
Inspection	_____
Intell.	_____
Laboratory	_____
Plan. & Eval.	_____
Spec. Inv.	_____
Training	_____
Legal Coun.	_____
Telephone Rm.	_____
Director Sec'y	_____

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)

FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45)(P)

UNSUB;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED)
LMRDA - OOJ
OO: OKLAHOMA CITY

For information of the Bureau, at Oklahoma City on the morning of August 29, 1975, a local news broadcast was heard during which a female identified as chair woman of the Oklahoma City chapter of the National Organization of Women, (NOW) was designating 11/13/75 (The first anniversary of the death of KAREN GAY SILKWOOD) as a national day of mourning and would have demonstrations that date at various places throughout the United States commemorating this event.

No specific information was given as to where these demonstrations would occur.

This spokeswoman also alluded to "new" information in possession of NOW regarding SILKWOOD's accident and contamination incident.

Oklahoma City, as of dictation of this communication, has not been contacted by NOW in regard to any "new" information. A review of local news media during period 8/29 - 9/2/75, has not developed any additional information regarding proposed NOW demonstrations.

It is anticipated that demonstrations relative to SILKWOOD could be held at the Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma. Liaison with KMC security has failed to develop any additional information regarding proposed NOW demonstrations.

2- Bureau (2-159-4005)(1-117-2702)
3- Oklahoma City (2-159-45)(1-117-51)
LJO/mm (6)

Approved: _____
Special Agent in Charge

Sent _____ M Per _____

70 SEP 18 1975

OC 159-45

By separate communication within the Cimarron Facility control file, the Bureau has been requested to resolve aspects of trespassing violation under the AEA.

Oklahoma City will remain alert for any additional information regarding proposed NOW demonstrations re SILKWOOD and advise Bureau by appropriate communication.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Gallagher

DATE: August 25, 1975

FROM : L. E. Rhyne

SUBJECT: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD
(DECEASED)
LABOR MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND
DISCLOSURE ACT
OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

1 - Mr. Adams
1 - Mr. Gallagher
1 - Mr. Rhyne
1 - Mr. Yelvington
1 - Mr. Moore
1 - Mr. Wannall

Assoc. Dir. ☒
Dep. AD Adm. ☒
Dep. AD Inv. ☒
Asst. Dir.:
Admin. ☐
Comp. Syst. ☐
Ext. Affairs ☐
Files & Com. ☒
Gen. Inv. ☒
Ident. ☐
Inspection ☐
Intell. ☐
Laboratory ☐
Legal Coun. ☐
Plan. & Eval. ☐
Spec. Inv. ☐
Training ☐
Telephone Rm. ☐
Director Sec'y ☐

PURPOSE: This is to advise that a newspaper article appeared in the August 23, 1975 edition of "The Daily Oklahoman," a daily newspaper published at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, wherein it was stated that the National Organization of Women (NOW) is calling for a national strike on October 29, 1975. In addition, NOW is planning a number of actions August 26, 1975, one of which will be a candlelight vigil from the elipse, Washington, D. C., to the U. S. Department of Justice formally calling for a reopening of the investigation into the death of Karen Silkwood. The Department of Justice and Secret Service have been advised.

DETAILS: On 11/21/74, a Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA)-Obstruction of Justice (OOJ) investigation was instituted by our Oklahoma City Office upon receipt of a request dated 11/20/74, from the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), Criminal Division, Department of Justice. This request was based on an article appearing in the "New York Times" on 11/19/74, and a telegram received by the Attorney General (AG) from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) on the same date suggesting that the death of Karen G. Silkwood, who died in a one-car accident on 11/13/74, was caused by Silkwood's automobile being hit from behind by another vehicle causing it to run off the road. The Department advised that if these allegations were substantiated, a possible violation of Section 530, Title 29, U. S. Code (USC) (through the impairment of Silkwood's rights as a union member guaranteed by Section 411 Title 29, USC) and Section 1505, Title 18, USC (in that Silkwood was a witness in a pending investigation before the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)) would exist.

A thorough investigation was conducted in this matter and no information was developed indicating the death of Silkwood was other than accidental. An autopsy, which was

JHY:pms (7)

10 OCT 1 1975

CONTINUED - OVER

File in
159-4005

22 AUG 29 1975

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Deleted Copy Sent
by Letter Dated 3/6/76
Per FOIA Request

MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
FROM L. E. RHYNE

performed on Silkwood, indicated she was under the influence of a drug (methaqualone) at the time of her death. The Chief Medical Examiner, Board of Medicolegal, Oklahoma City, advised this drug is a sleep inducing drug. The amount found in Silkwood's system subsequent to her death would indicate that she was under the influence of the drug at the time of her death and was drowsy or sleepy.

The results of all investigation conducted relative to the LMRDA-OOJ violation have been furnished to the Management and Labor Section, Criminal Division, Department of Justice.

The Department has requested additional investigation be conducted in this matter, namely the interview of the first person or persons to discover the Silkwood automobile after the crash. Oklahoma City has interviewed two of the three persons who discovered Silkwood's wrecked car and is currently attempting to locate the third person for interview.

There are two Atomic Energy Act investigations currently being conducted concerning Silkwood and the company for which she was employed prior to her death, the Kerr-McGee Corporation. These investigations relate to the scattering of uranium fuel pellets at Kerr-McGee on 12/16/74, and the possession of plutonium resulting in the contamination of Silkwood and others in November, 1974. These investigations are being supervised by the Intelligence Division.

The Oklahoma City Office advised that the August 23, 1975 edition of "The Daily Oklahoman," a daily newspaper published at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, had an article captioned "Women's Group Calls For Strike" subcaptioned "Silkwood Case Cited." The article in part indicated that the National Organization of Women (NOW) is calling for a national strike October 29, 1975, final details for the strike to be worked out at NOW's national convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on October 24-27, 1975. The article continued that NOW is planning a number of actions August 26, 1975, with a national focus at Washington, D. C., where NOW members are staging a candlelight vigil from the elipse to the Justice Department and will formally call for a reopening of the investigation into the death of Karen Silkwood.

MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
FROM L. E. RHYNE

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[redacted] Department of Justice, Management and Labor Section was telephonically advised on 8/25/75 of the proposed action of NOW planned at Washington, D. C., for 8/26/75. [redacted] advised he was aware of this information and in fact is scheduled to meet with representatives of NOW at the Department on 8/26/75. In addition, Secret Service has been advised.

ACTION: For information.

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Pm*

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten mark]

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)

FROM : SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (C)

DATE: 9/22/75

SUBJECT: UNSUBS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
LMRDA; OOJ
OO: Oklahoma City

Re Oklahoma City airtel and LHM, 7/25/75.

Enclosed for the Bureau are six copies of LHM dated and captioned as above. One copy of LHM being furnished to United States Attorney, Oklahoma City.

Enclosed LHM in part sets forth results of interview with [redacted] who was among the first three persons on the scene of SILKWOOD's fatal accident 11/13/75. Results of interview with [redacted] two companions have been previously reported by referenced airtel and LHM.

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On 8/28/75, case agent [redacted] received an unsolicited telephone call from [redacted] telephone number (202) 722-0827 of the National Organization of Women (NOW). It was known to SA [redacted] that one [redacted] was the [redacted] of NOW's protest relative to SILKWOOD. [redacted] advised that she was among those persons who participated in the 8/26/75, NOW - U.S. Department of Justice meeting. [redacted] requested information relative to the status of FBI investigation relative to the various SILKWOOD matters and questioned the thoroughness in which any FBI investigation was conducted. [redacted] was advised that all investigation conducted by the FBI relative to the various SILKWOOD matters has been reported to the United States Department of Justice and the United States Attorney's Office, Oklahoma City, and she was assured that every aspect relative to the SILKWOOD matter has been thoroughly investigated by the FBI, and reported as described above. [redacted] was advised that information concerning ongoing FBI investigations could not be divulged and it was suggested to her to recontact the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. in the event she had any unresolved questions. SA OLSON informed [redacted] the FBI would welcome information from any source, including the NOW organization relative to

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2 - Bureau (Enc. 2)

1 - Oklahoma City

LJO:pwo

(3)

ENCLOSURE FROM CRIM. DIV. by 0-6D

1cc LABOR DESK, TICKLER

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SEP 26 1975

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

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5010-108-02

OC 159-45

any new leads regarding captioned case or any of the other related SILKWOOD cases including the SILKWOOD contamination incident. SA [] asked [] if she had any information in this regard that she wished to furnish at this time. [] indicated that she had no information in this regard.

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Inasmuch as all investigation in this matter has been completed and reported, Oklahoma City is placing this case in closed status. In the event additional instructions are received from the Bureau or the Department requesting additional investigation in this matter or in the event information is received relative to substantial information of value pertaining to new leads in this matter, the case will be reopened and any necessary investigation conducted.

NUCLEAR REFERENCE

SEARCH SLIP

Subj: Kerr-Mc Lee Nuclear Corporation

Supervisor _____ Room _____

R# _____ Date 6-17 Searcher Initial Jan

Prod. _____

FILE NUMBER

SERIAL

Kerr-Mc Lee Co (Var)52-53711-8Kerr-Mc Lee Coal Mine174-1652Kerr-Mc Lee Chemical Corp.60-7229-1 incl p 3Kerr-Mc Lee Building174-3-5984Kerr-Mc Lee29-28704-4149 p 421, 422, 560561, 563, 564, 566, 567, 580,581, 583, 584, 599, 622Search completed.

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Records Section

6/17/58

1958

Fo ☐ Name Searching Unit, 4543 JEH-FBI Bldg.☐ ~~Name Searching Unit, 4543 JEH-FBI Bldg.~~☐ Forward to ☐ wA ☐ Attention☐ Return to MLH 54425568

Supervisor Room Ext.

Type of References Requested:

- ☐ Regular Request (Analytical Search)
☒ All References (Subversive & Nonsubversive)
☐ Subversive References Only
☐ Nonsubversive References Only
☐ Main _____ References Only

Type of Search Requested:

- ☐ Restricted to Locality of _____
☐ Exact Name Only (On the Nose)
☐ Buildup ☐ Variations

Subject

KERR-McGEE Nuclear Corporation

Birthdate & Place _____

Address _____

Localities _____

R# _____

Date

6-17

Searcher

Initials Bar

Prod. _____

FILE NUMBER

SERIAL

117-2701

117-2696

117-2702

117-2702-21

(Var)

Kerr - Mc Gee Industries

62-102190-27

29-28704-3284

94-52214-11

(Var)

Kerr - Mc Gee Corporation

46-59566

56-4906

117-2692

117-2696

117-2702

174-1652

15-0-3448

105-212115-15

159-4005-20

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Federal Bureau of Investigation
Records Section6/17/, 1975☒ Name Searching Unit, 4543 JEH-FBI Bldg.☒ ~~Service Unit, 4654 JEH-FBI Bldg.~~☐ Forward to File

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☒ Attention

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☐ Return to MLH 5442 5568

Supervisor

Room

Ext.

Type of References Requested:

☐ Regular Request (Analytical Search)☒ All References (Subversive & Nonsubversive)☐ Subversive References Only☐ Nonsubversive References Only☐ Main _____ References Only

Type of Search Requested:

☐ Restricted to Locality of _____☐ Exact Name Only (On the Nose)☐ Buildup ☐ VariationsSubject S. Kwood, Karen

Birthdate & Place _____

Address _____

Localities _____

R# _____ Date 6-17 Searcher Initials AB

Prod. _____

FILE NUMBER

SERIAL

117-2702159-21085KAREN G.117-2701-3KAREN GAGETHNA

4/ NUMEROUS REFERENCE

SEARCH SLIP

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Subj: [REDACTED]

Supervisor

MLH

Room

5442 Jsk

R#

Date

6/17

Searcher

Initial

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Prod.

FILE NUMBER

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[REDACTED]

(P.11)

57

62 - 51406

Search Completed



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
September 22, 1975

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

UNKNOWN SUBJECT;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
LABOR - MANAGEMENT REPORTING
AND DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1959;
OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

Set forth below is results of interview of []
[] who was among the first individuals on the scene
of Silkwood's fatal accident November 13, 1974. Also set
forth is an interview with an official of the Oklahoma
Department of Highways who provided information relative
to the repaving of Oklahoma State Highway 74 on which road
the Silkwood fatal accident occurred.

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This document contains neither
recommendations nor conclusions of
the FBI. It is the property of
the FBI and is loaned to your agency;
it and its contents are not to be
distributed outside your agency.

157-715

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 9/19/75

[redacted] furnished the following information:

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On the evening of November 13, 1974, he traveled from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to [redacted] Oklahoma. Earlier on November 13, 1974, he was working at his then new residence [redacted] assisted by one of his employees, [redacted] and [redacted] 14 year old brother-in-law, [redacted] where they all had been engaged in making the house ready for occupancy.

After they concluded work at the residence they drove a little distance north and ate a brief evening meal in the McDonald's Hamburger stand on N. May. After their meal they continued on northward toward [redacted] traveling on Oklahoma State Highway 74. He was driving his pickup truck and [redacted] and [redacted] were following along a short distance behind with [redacted] driving a one ton dual wheel truck. He cannot recall the exact time of day but it was shortly after sundown on November 13 that they came upon a wreck. As he recalls they had driven but a few miles from Oklahoma City when it became necessary to turn on the truck headlights. Thereafter they traveled a short distance and he noticed that [redacted] behind him was flashing his headlights from high to low beam. He first thought that some object had fallen off his pickup truck and [redacted] was trying to alert him to this fact so he turned around and went back to where [redacted] had stopped along the highway.

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[redacted] had stopped some seven miles south of Crescent, Oklahoma, on State Highway 74. [redacted] had discovered a wrecked car lying in a culvert alongside the road. He had passed this same wrecked car and had not noticed it. Apparently [redacted] could more readily see this wreck than he could since [redacted] was driving a larger vehicle and sat at a higher distance off the road.

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When he found out there was a wrecked car in the culvert he pulled off the east side of State Highway 74 and drove his pickup right to the edge of the culvert with his headlights shining in a southerly direction. Because of the difference in elevation his headlights did not clearly illuminate

Interviewed on 9/14/75 at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma File # Oklahoma City 159-45

by SA [redacted] b6
b7C Date dictated 9/16/75

OC 159-45

the wreck and he was unable to tell if there was anyone in the wrecked car. Neither he nor [] had a flashlight in their respective vehicles. He thereafter told [] to drive the one-ton truck around to the south side of the culvert and put the truck with its back end on the east bank so the truck lights would be deflected downward into the culvert. After [] moved the truck he was able to see that there was an arm protruding through the car window. The arm was motionless. Both [] and [] had hollered down to the car and had gotten no response.

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As he recalls it was at about this time two other persons stopped at the wreck scene. One of these two individuals had a flashlight. One of the two individuals said he thought he recognized the car as belonging to a Kerr McGee employee and this individual took the flashlight and went down to the wreck and looked inside the car and said that he believed that the girl in the car worked at the Kerr McGee plant. It was about this time that he left the wreck scene, turned his truck around, and drove about 1½ miles north to the intersection of State Highway 74 and State Highway 33 to a crossroads grocery-gas station where he made a telephone call from an outside pay station. The station as he recalls was closed at this time.

He called the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Dispatcher in Oklahoma City. He made the call utilizing his company telephone credit card. He informed the dispatcher as to the location of the wreck and the fact that there was an injury-type incident and both a wrecker and ambulance would be needed. Upon completion of his telephone call he returned to the scene and found that some other persons had stopped at the wreck, including a carload of Negroes who appeared to be in a drunken condition. It seemed like only some five minutes had elapsed since he made the telephone call until the Oklahoma Highway Patrol arrived on the scene and immediately after the Highway Patrol a Guthrie ambulance arrived.

The wrecked car was lying on its left side in the culvert and he assisted those present in rolling the car over to its wheels. He also assisted in opening

OC 159-45

the driver's door which was jammed shut. A porta-power tool was used. The occupant of the car was removed from the car and thereafter placed in the ambulance. About the time that the ambulance departed the scene a wrecker arrived. Thereafter he checked with the Highway Patrol Trooper to see if he and his companions could be of any further assistance and thereafter found that they could not, therefore, they all left the scene and continued on to [redacted].

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When he first arrived at the accident scene he noted that the tracks of the wrecked vehicle were clearly visible for a great distance down the bar-ditch on the east side of the road. These tracks were well illuminated by the lights of [redacted] truck. The tracks as far as he could see them up the bar-ditch, which was almost to the intersection of the section line road about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north of the accident site, were straight and uninterrupted. It appeared to him that the driver of the wrecked car made no effort to brake or to change the direction of the car until a couple of feet in front of the culvert wall. At this point he noticed that the tracks made by the wrecked car turned slightly back west toward the road.

At the time that he made these observations in regard to the tire tracks no other vehicles other than his truck had crossed the wrecked car's tire tracks.

At the time the female wreck victim was removed from her car he noted that blood on her face had dried. This indicated to him that the wreck had occurred at least 30 or 45 minutes prior to its discovery by [redacted].

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He drives each year well over 100,000 miles. Based on his experience it appears to him that the November 13, 1974, wreck was the result of a driver falling asleep at the wheel and thereafter running off the road. He is aware that some controversy had arisen surrounding the circumstances of this particular wreck. If the driver of the wrecked car had in fact been forced off the road it seems to him that there would have been some visible signs of the driver fighting for control of the car and making efforts to stop the car. There were several options

OC 159-45

4

available to the driver other than going into the culvert. The driver could have driven off into the field and come to a safe stop and certainly had the opportunity to have returned the vehicle to the road and come to a safe stop.

In regard to any items in the vicinity of the car wreck the only items he can recall scattered on the ground were some of the contents of the driver's purse, such as cigarettes, cigarette lighter, et cetera. He does not recall having seen any quantity of papers or notebooks scattered around.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 9/22/75

[redacted] Oklahoma
Department of Highways, furnished the following information:

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A contract was let to pave Oklahoma State Highway 74 northward from the Oklahoma-Logan County line during September, 1973. The work for this portion of the highway was completed on February 25, 1974. Six miles of State Highway 74 had been paved during the course of this contract.

A separate contract was let on July 26, 1974 for Project MC 42(54) to pave another section of State Highway 74 northward from the previously completed six mile project.

Work on this second contract actually started December 9, 1974 and was completed January 28, 1975.

The portion of State Highway 74 covered by this second contract extended northward from a point three and one-half miles south from the intersection of State Highways 74 and 33 to a point two miles north of 74-33 intersection.

This contract was let to the Evans and Throop Company and called for the application of one and one-half inches of asphaltic concrete to the previously existing road surface. This work also included paving of the highway centers. The bid price of this second contract was \$110,187.00.

Interviewed on 9/12/75 at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma File # Oklahoma City 159-45
by SA [redacted] b6
b7C Date dictated 9/18/75

DIRECTOR, FBI

9/24/75

SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (117-43)(P)

KERR MC GEE CORPORATION
NUCLEAR PRODUCTS DIVISION
CIMAARRON FACILITY
CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA
AEA
OO: Oklahoma City

Kerr Mc Gee

Re Oklahoma City letter to Bureau, 9/9/75.

For information of the Bureau, on 9/8/75. SA

[redacted] when in contact with [redacted]
[redacted] Regulation and Control, Kerr Mc Gee Nuclear Corporation, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, verified the fact that the captioned facility is in the process of being shut down.

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[redacted] advised that the entire facility including both the plutonium plant and uranium plant are going to be closed. This is a result of the fact that the company was unable to secure any additional contracts for the production of either uranium or plutonium fuel rods.

He anticipates that all work on the present and only existing plutonium contract will be completed by the end of 9/75 and the uranium contract will be completed on or about 11/1/75. He anticipates that both plants will be fully shut down and in a standby status by the end of 12/75.

[redacted] advised that there is some potential the plutonium plant would after some considerable modification possibly be reopened to handle the recycling of plutonium fuel rod assemblies; however, he believes there is little potential for the uranium plant to be opened again. His company is presently consulting with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in regard to when the present safeguards and

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3-Bureau

(1-159-4005)

4-Oklahoma City (1-159-45)
(1-117-51)

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(7)

5 OCT 08 1975

NOT RECORDED
183 SEP 30 1975

SIX

ORIGINAL FILED IN 117-

OC 117-43

security for the plutonium plant can be reduced inasmuch as there will be little reason for providing such protection to the plant once its operation is curtailed.

Oklahoma City will follow and keep the Bureau advised of any pertinent developments in this matter.

F B I

Date: 9/11/75

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via AIRTEL _____
(Priority)

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (117-2702)

FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (117-51)(P)

UNSUBS; Unauthorized
Possession of Plutonium
Resulting in the Contamination of
KAREN G. SILKWOOD (Deceased),[redacted] and [redacted] Kerr
McGee Corporation (KMC),
Nuclear Products Division,
Cimarron Facility,
Crescent, Oklahoma
AEA

OO: Oklahoma City

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Enclosed herewith for Denver is one copy of a letter dated 1/20/75 to members of the OCAW at the Kerr McGee Nuclear Corporation, Crescent, Oklahoma from [redacted] and [redacted]

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The Bureau, by teletype dated 3/14/75, designated captioned case as a Bureau special.

159-4005-

For the information of Denver, captioned case relates to a contamination incident which involved KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased), who was an activist in the oil chemical and atomic workers international union, who was employed prior to her death by the Kerr McGee Nuclear Products Division, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma where she worked in the plutonium fuel rod plant. SILKWOOD was involved in a contamination incident on or about 11/5/74 and was found to have been exposed to plutonium. Her apartment was found to be contaminated with plutonium as well.

3- Bureau (2-117-2702) (1-159-4005)

2- Denver (Encs. 1)

2- Oklahoma City

LJO/nan

(7)

NOT RECORDED

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7 SEP 15 1975

58 OCT 10 1975

Approved: _____

Sent _____

Special Agent in Charge

U.S. Government Printing Office: 1972 - 455-574

ORIGINAL FILED IN 117-2702-416

SILKWOOD died on the evening of 11/13/74 in a one car accident some 7 miles south of Crescent, Oklahoma.

The circumstances of her death and the circumstances surrounding the contamination incident involving SILKWOOD and her apartment has been the subject of much controversy and sensational publicity in the various media.

As a result, several separate cases have arisen concerning the various aspects of the controversy among which are the following cases, all of which Oklahoma City is Office of Origin.

Oklahoma City file 159-45, Bufile 159-4005 entitled "UNSUBS; KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased), LMRDA; OOJ" which case is presently in a Pending status and which primarily relates to the investigation conducted relative to the circumstances of SILKWOOD's death.

Captioned case, which as previously indicated, primarily relates to the contamination incident which case is also in a Pending status.

Oklahoma City 117-49, Bufile 117-2696 entitled "UNSUB; Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr McGee Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, 12/16/74, AEA" which case is in a Closed status and which case relates to an investigation relative to an incident where a relatively small quantity of radio active uranium fuel pellets were found scattered on the facility grounds. Extensive investigation failed to develop the identity of the individual responsible for this incident or failed to establish the motive for the scattering.

Oklahoma City recently instituted investigation in Oklahoma City file 117-54, Bufile 117-2701, entitled, "Kerr McGee Nuclear Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, AEA; OOJ," which case pertains to an investigation being conducted to determine whether

or not the Kerr McGee Corporation is in criminal violation of Title 18, Section 1505 and 1510 (OOJ) and/or possible violation of the Atomic Energy Act, Title 10, CFR, Part 19.16 (c), stemming from the company's treatment of [] and [] both of whom were active in the OCAW as committeemen and both of whom were associates of SILKWOOD and also employed at the Cimarron Facility. The national labor relations board has previously conducted extensive investigation in an effort to substantiate similar civil violations against the company concerning these two individuals.

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The OCAW has been responsible for making numerous allegations relative to the above mentioned cases which allegations in many instances, were the partial basis for instituting investigation relative to these matters.

The bulk of the allegations made by the union are set out in enclosed letter. The authors of the letter, [] and [] have been previously interviewed relative to these various cases and the allegations made by the union.

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No direct or indirect contact has been had with representatives of the OCAW since 2/25/75 when [] was last interviewed.

For completeness, it is felt that the OCAW should again be contacted in an effort to determine whether or not they have developed any substantive information which would support their allegations set out in the enclosed letter or developed any new information which would pertain to any of the matters outlined above. It is noted that the head of the OCAW, [] OCAW with headquarters at 6136 Campa Street, Denver, Colorado, has not been previously contacted by this agency in regard to captioned case and related matters. Accordingly, the following lead is being set forth. It is noted that all information received from various sources including the OCAW relative to captioned case and related matters, has been investigated and reported to the various captions.

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It is felt that OCAW [redacted] would be the best person to contact relative to this case, inasmuch as he can authoritatively state whether or not the union has any positive information of value regarding this case.

A summary of information relative to the status of the investigation of the various cases relating to SILKWOOD has been outlined above in the event that [redacted] is desirous of obtaining information in that regard noting that recent newspaper publicity has erroneously reported information indicating that many of these cases were not currently being investigated by the FBI.

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LEADS

DENVER

[redacted] AT DENVER, COLORADO Will contact [redacted] OCAW, 6136 Campa Street and determine whether or not they have developed any substantive information which would support their allegations set out in the enclosed letter or developed any new information which would pertain to any of the matters outlined above.

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OKLAHOMA CITY

AT OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA Investigation continuing.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep.-A.D.-Adm. _____
Dep.-A.D.-Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.: _____
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Files & Com. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

NR 013 OC PLAIN

753 PM NITEL OCT 30, 1975 DAF

OCT 30 1975

TO DIRECTOR 159-4005

TELETYPE

FROM OKLAHOMA CITY 159-45 P

UNSUB; KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED), LMRDA; OOJ, OO:
OKLAHOMA CITY.

FOR INFORMATION OF BUREAU ON OCT 28, 1975, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], KERR MC GEE CORPORATION (KMC), ADVISED

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THAT DURING CONTACT WITH OKLAHOMA CITY PD OFFICER [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] CONCERNING MATTER NOT RELATED TO CAPTIONED CASE, HE
DEVELOPED INFORMATION FROM [REDACTED] THAT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] OKLA. REPORTEDLY WAS WITNESS TO SILKWOOD FATAL
ACCIDENT NOV 13, 1974.

[REDACTED] LOCATED AND INTERVIEWED [REDACTED] OKLA. OCT 29,
1975. IT WAS DETERMINED THAT [REDACTED] DID NOT ACTUALLY WITNESS
ACCIDENT, BUT DID PASS BY SCENE AFTER ACCIDENT HAD ALREADY
BEEN DISCOVERED AND REPORTED.

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DETAILS OF INTERVIEW WILL BE SUBMITTED BY CLOSING LHM.

END

REC-28

159-4005-51

HOLD

EX 103

OCT 31 1975

Deleted Copy Sent [REDACTED]
by Letter Dated 3-16-76 *Per*
Per FOIA Request *Re K. Silkwood*

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b6
b7C

5321
22 1975

1 - Mr. J. B. Adams b6
1 - Mr. R. J. Gallagher b7C
Attn:
1 - Congressional Liaison
1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall

November 7, 1975

1 - Mr. S. S. Mignosa
1 - Mr. R. K. McHargue

REC-65

K
159-4005-52
Honorable Gilbert Gude
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congressman Gude:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 18, 1975, with enclosure, requesting information in regard to the deceased Karen Silkwood. The enclosure is being returned to you as you requested.

Karen Silkwood was an employee of the Kerr McGee Nuclear Corporation located in Crescent, Oklahoma, and was active in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW). On November 5, 1974, Miss Silkwood claimed to have become contaminated by plutonium through faulty safety procedures in effect at Kerr McGee. On the evening of November 13, 1974, Silkwood was killed in a one car automobile accident following her attendance at an OCAW meeting.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has conducted a lengthy investigation into the events surrounding Miss Silkwood's death. The results of this investigation were submitted to the Department of Justice for consideration. In the event you wish additional information, it is suggested you communicate with the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice.

Sincerely yours,

G. M. Kelley

Clarence M. Kelley
Director

Enclosure

1 - Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division

RKM:ddc

(10)

SEE NOTE PAGE 2

MAIL ROOM ☒

TELETYPE UNIT ☐

Honorable Gilbert Gude

NOTE:

By letter dated 9/18/75, Congressman Gude requested the FBI furnish him with information regarding the deceased Karen Silkwood. His letter was prompted by a note from [redacted] a constituent of Gude's, who requested Gude have a thorough investigation of Silkwood's death conducted.

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There have been four cases opened in this matter. The first concerns the unauthorized possession of plutonium which resulted in the contamination of Silkwood (CI-3); the second, the scattering of uranium fuel pellets at Kerr McGee (CI-3); the third, the death of Silkwood, handled by the General Investigative Division; and the fourth, alleged irregularities at the Kerr McGee facility in Oklahoma. The above reply generally encompasses all four investigations; consequently, this memorandum is being routed to the General Investigative Division.

The investigations concerning the scattering of uranium fuel pellets and the investigation of Silkwood's death have been closed. The cases concerning unauthorized possession of plutonium and the Kerr McGee facility are pending.

Assoc. Dir.	___
Dep. AD Adm.	___
Dep. AD Inv.	___
Asst. Dir.:	
Admin.	___
Comp. Syst.	___
Ext. Affairs	___
Files & Com.	___
Gen. Inv.	___
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Laboratory	___
Legal Coun.	___
Plan. & Eval.	___
Spec. Inv.	___
Training	___
Telephone Rm.	___
Director Sec'y	___

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
 Washington, D.C.

September 18 1975

Federal Bureau of Investigation
 Office of Congressional Liaison
 10th and Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20535

Sir:

The attached communication
 is sent for your consideration.
 Please investigate the statements
 contained therein and forward me
 the necessary information for re-
 ply, returning the enclosed corre-
 spondence with your answer.

Yours truly,

Gilbert Gude
 Gilbert Gude, M. C.

Madison
11/11
yellow

NO SEP 30 1975

REC-65

159-4005-52

SEP 30 1975

CORRESPONDENCE

ENCLOSURE

10/15/75
208
29
11-5-75
RK M. C. G.

28 Aug. 73
Dear Congressman Lytle, SEP 2 1973

Please proceed to have a thorough investigation (FBI-IRS-CIA etc.) on the deceased Karen Silkwood- the Plutonium case which the Dept. of Justice wishes to drop. A great many Americans feel a direct threat to themselves and their families when government covers over and hides all the facts. We feel cheated of knowledge which in such a case is rightfully ours. We the people demand to know.
Sincerely,

b6
b7C

MR. & MRS. JOHN B. KENNEDY
1549 NORTH FAULKLAND LANE #220
SILVER SPRING, MD. 20910



Adams

Patriot

USPS-1150

Congressman Gilbert Lytle
U.S. Congressman for Maryland
U.S. Congress
Washington, D.C.

MR. & MRS.

JOHN B. KENNEDY
ADDRESS 1549 NORTH
FAULKLAND LANE #220
SILVER SPRING, MD.

159-4005-52

ENCLOSURE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. J. B. Adams

DATE: 11/21/75

FROM : Legal Counsel *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: SUBCOMMITTEE ON REPORTS,
ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.: _____
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Files & Com. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
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Laboratory _____
Legal Coun. _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

On November 21, [redacted] Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice, telephonically advised me that representatives of captioned Subcommittee had been inquiring in the Criminal Division concerning an investigation by the FBI of the death of Karen Silkwood and related charges concerning safety violations at the Kerr-McGee Corporation plant in Oklahoma. He said that Chief Counsel of the Subcommittee, [redacted] assisted by a [redacted] who is an investigator of Congressman Dingel, temporarily on loan to the Subcommittee, and the Minority Counsel, whose name he could not recall, had contacted the Criminal Division and requested access to reports in these matters. [redacted] said that the Criminal Division prepared a summary concerning the homicide investigation of Karen Silkwood and made it available to the staff. The staff also inquired concerning the investigation of contamination of the plant and an allegation concerning misuse of plutonium pellets at another installation. He said that a summary was prepared by the Criminal Division on the plutonium pellets matter but not delivered to the staff and no response was given to the staff concerning the contamination matter because that investigation has not yet been completed by the FBI.

The Department has now received a letter signed by Senator Lee Metcalf, Chairman of the captioned Subcommittee. Copy of that letter dated November 17, 1975, addressed to the Attorney General, is attached. The Chairman requests that the Subcommittee investigators be furnished copies of memoranda relating to the investigations described above. He

- 1 - Mr. Gallagher
- 1 - Mr. Moore
- 1 - Mr. Hotis
- 1 - Mr. Mintz

JAM:mtm

ENCLOSURE

(5) *[Signature]*

SEE ADDENDUM GID PAGE 4

SEE ADDENDUM INTD PAGE 5

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

157-4005-
NOTED
170 DEC 1 1975
DEC 10 1975
CONTINUED - OVER *[Signature]*

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b7C

ORIGINAL FILED IN

62-98810-1305

Memorandum to Mr. Adams

Re: SUBCOMMITTEE ON REPORTS,
ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

further requests that the Subcommittee have complete access to all FBI and Justice Department files, memoranda and other materials relating to any investigations conducted by the FBI or the Department in connection with these matters. Further, he requests that the Subcommittee be given access to all FBI and Justice personnel involved in the investigations.

[redacted] asked me for a comment as to the Bureau's reaction to the letter and I told him that the FBI was unwilling to agree to giving complete access to all of our files and that we were unwilling to grant free access to all personnel who might have been involved in such investigations. I explained to him that this assertion of authority to inquire into the FBI by captioned Subcommittee shows the proliferation of committees attempting to claim oversight over the FBI in both the House and the Senate. I told him that except for the Senate Select and House Select Committees on Intelligence, the Bureau has been unwilling to furnish access to FBI file material to other committees and that the Attorney General has supported us in protecting the Bureau's files:

[redacted] asked for my suggestion as to what might be done in response to the Chairman's requests and I told him that we would respond in writing to requests received in writing from the Committee addressed to the Attorney General and forwarded to the FBI for response. I told him that our reply would be routed through the Department back to the Committee. I told him that in regard to request for access to personnel, that it might be possible for Committee staff inquiries to be more specific as a result of obtaining written responses and if it was necessary for such specific questions to be answered by a personal briefing we would entertain the request for a briefing by a Bureau official. [redacted] said that he understood our position and that it was likely that a discussion would be held by the Criminal Division with the Deputy Attorney General on Monday, November 24, 1975. He asked whether the Bureau would be willing to participate in such a discussion and I told him that we would and would await his call.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the General Investigative Division review the requests for information concerning the homicide investigation of Karen Silkwood;

Memorandum to Mr. Adams

Re: SUBCOMMITTEE ON REPORTS,
ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

the investigation of contamination at Kerr-McGee; and the matter concerning plutonium pellets, and provide recommendations as to whether any such material or summaries may be furnished to the Subcommittee.

2. That if requested, Assistant Director Gallagher, Mr. Adams and I join the Criminal Division in discussing this matter with the Deputy Attorney General.

General Investigative Division (GID) is aware of at least three separate investigations conducted by the FBI relative to Karen Silkwood, which are identified as follows: "Unknown Subject; Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr McGee Corporation (KMC), Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, 12/16/74, AEA," Bufile 117-2696, "Unsubs; Unauthorized Possession of Plutonium Resulting in Contamination of Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased), Etc., AEA," Bufile 117-2702, "Unsubs; Karen Gay Silkwood (Deceased), Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA)," Bufile 159-4005.

The AEA investigations described above were supervised by Section CI-3 of the Intelligence Division. It is believed investigation relative to the Unauthorized Possession of Plutonium is still pending.

The LMRDA investigation was instituted upon receipt of a request dated 11/20/74, from the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division. This investigation was to determine if violations of Section 530, Title 29, USC (through the impairment of Silkwood's rights guaranteed by Section 411, Title 29, USC) and Section 1505, Title 18, USC, (in that Silkwood was a witness in a pending investigation before AEA) existed. No information was developed during this investigation to indicate the death of Silkwood was other than accidental.

The results of all investigation conducted relative to the LMRDA violation were furnished to the Management and Labor Section, Criminal Division.

GID believes that since the Criminal Division has prepared a summary concerning the LMRDA investigation and made the summary available to captioned subcommittee, no additional material or summaries should be furnished by the FBI.

GID recommends this memorandum be forwarded to the Intelligence Division for their comments concerning the AEA investigations.

ADDENDUM INTELLIGENCE DIVISION (INTD) 11/24/75 RKM:ddc

Intelligence Division is aware of one additional pending case relative to Karen Silkwood and the Kerr McGee Corporation of Crescent, Oklahoma. This case is titled "Kerr McGee Nuclear Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, AEA," Bureau file 117-2701. This investigation concerns possible violation of Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations 18 USC, Sections 1505 and 1510 and 10 CFR, Section 19.16 (C). These alleged violations were brought to the attention of the Department of Justice by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW). All information concerning this continuing investigation has been furnished the Department of Justice, General Crime Division.

As the General Investigative Division points out, the Intelligence Division also has a pending case titled "Unsub; Unauthorized Possession of Plutonium Resulting in Contamination of Karen G. Silkwood (Deceased), etc., AEA." Information concerning this matter has also been furnished the Department.

[redacted] Department of Justice, advised 11/24/75 that he has prepared a summary of the closed case "Unsub; Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr McGee Corporation (KMC), Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, 12/16/74, AEA." In view of this, the Intelligence Division believes that no additional material or summaries concerning the two pending cases be furnished by the FBI.

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SSM

WRW/HOL

[Handwritten signatures and initials]

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (159-4005)

DATE: 2/23/76

FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) (C)

SUBJECT: UNSUB;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED)
LMRDA; OOJ
OO: Oklahoma City

Enclosed herewith for the Bureau is the original and five copies of LHM dated and captioned as above. One copy of same LHM furnished USA, Oklahoma City.

Inasmuch as all investigation has been completed and reported, Oklahoma City is again placing this case in a closed status.

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1 - Letter dated 2/23/76
for FOIA Request

REC-39

159-4005-53

ST-101

23 MAR 1 1976

- (2) - Bureau (Enc. 6)
1 - Oklahoma City
LJO:abp
(3)

ENCLOSURE

2cc ROM CRIM. DIV., by O-6D

1cc LABOR CASE, TICKLER

3/8/76

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MEMORANDUM
FILE

56 MAR 10 1976



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
February 23, 1976

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No. 159-45

UNKNOWN SUBJECT;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED)
LABOR-MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND
DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1959 - OBSTRUCTION
OF JUSTICE

On October 28, 1975, [redacted]
[redacted] Kerr McGee Corporation (KMC), Oklahoma City, Oklahoma,
advised that during the course of an investigation conducted
by him in regard to another company matter unrelated to the
various Silkwood cases, he was in contact with Sgt. [redacted]
[redacted] Oklahoma City Police Department. During the
course of this contact he learned that [redacted] had a former
relation, possibly an ex-brother-in-law, who resided in [redacted]
Oklahoma, by the name of [redacted]. According to [redacted],
[redacted] was a witness to the actual accident which Silkwood had
causing her death November 13, 1974. It was [redacted] under-
standing that [redacted] at the time of the accident was involved
in marital difficulties and may possibly have been in a
compromising situation with a female and possibly under the
influence of alcohol at the time of the accident; therefore,
he did not stop at the accident.

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On October 29, 1975, [redacted] was contacted
at which time he could provide no information beyond the informa-
tion he provided to [redacted]. [redacted] advised that he did not
know for a fact that [redacted] had a companion at the time that
he allegedly observed the Silkwood accident. This was merely
speculation on his part.

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Set forth below are results of interview with [redacted]

[redacted]:

This document contains neither
recommendations nor conclusions of
the FBI. It is the property of
the FBI and is loaned to your agency;
it and its contents are not to be
distributed outside your agency.

ENCLOSURE

159-1105-53

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date of transcription 11/11/75

[redacted] was interviewed at his place of business, [redacted] and furnished the following information:

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On an evening in November, 1974, exact date unrecalled at this time, he was traveling from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Enid, Oklahoma, via State Highway 74. He was driving north on State Highway 74 in his red Pontiac Trans Am when he happened on a wreck just south of Crescent, Oklahoma.

From the attendant publicity with this wreck, he learned that the wreck obviously was the wreck of KAREN SILKWOOD in which she met her death.

He cannot recall the time of day that he observed the wreck, but it was sometime in the early evening shortly after sundown.

Prior to coming upon the scene of the wreck, he saw the tail lights of a car ahead of him also heading north towards Crescent. This car was about one-half mile ahead of him as he traveled. He was driving at 70 miles per hour and never overtook this vehicle. He assumed that the car that he saw wrecked was the car that had been traveling ahead of him.

As he approached the wreck, he noted that there were perhaps two other vehicles already on the scene. This wreck had occurred in a culvert located on the east side of the road. One of the vehicles had pulled off the road, up near the right-of-way fence and shown its lights down on the wrecked car. The wrecked car was a little white foreign car, make unrecalled.

It was his recollection that the wrecked car was on its wheels with its front end pointed north. He recalls that there was heavy damage to the front end of his car.

He had a mobile telephone in his car and attempted to use the telephone to call the highway patrol, however, he found that the mobile telephone was inoperative. He did not get out of his car, but stopped his car on the edge of the east

Interviewed on 10/29/75 at Enid, Oklahoma Oklahoma City 159-45

SA's [redacted] and

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by [redacted] Date dictated 11/4/75

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²
OC 159-45

shoulder of the road where he could see down into the culvert.

He did not talk to anyone on the wreck scene and cannot at this time, recall who he saw there. It is his impression that there may have been one or two people near the car itself while he was there. It was his impression that this wreck had occurred only moments before he arrived and he assumed that no one had yet had the opportunity to call the highway patrol.

He was aware that there was a public pay telephone a mile or so down the road, so he went to that location, the intersection of State Highway 74 and State Highway 33 and called the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, advising them of the wreck. As he pulled away from the station from where he made the call, he noted a highway patrol car running with its red light, heading south down State Highway 74 towards the wreck.

Inasmuch as the highway patrol was enroute to the scene, he decided to continue his trip to Enid.

While at the scene of the wreck, he did not observe any papers or any articles scattered about by the wrecked car.

While traveling north on State Highway 74 prior to his coming upon the wreck, he did not observe any vehicles driving south on Highway 74 at a high rate of speed, nor did he observe anything suspicious that would appear to relate to the SILKWOOD accident.

March 16, 1976

1 - Mr. Mintz

Attention: Mr. Moschella

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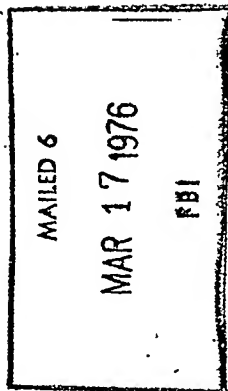
2005 L Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Mr. Dobrouir:

The enclosed documents are being released to you in accordance with the stipulation of counsel in connection with the pending litigation captioned National Public Radio, et al., v. Edward H. Levi.

Excisions have been made from these documents, and other documents have been withheld in their entirety in order to withhold materials which are exempted from disclosure by the following subsections of Title 5, United States Code, Section 552:

- (b) (2) materials related solely to the internal rules and practices of the FBI;
- (b) (5) inter-agency or intra-agency documents which are not available through discovery proceedings during litigation; or documents whose disclosure would have an inhibitive effect upon the development of policy and administrative direction; or which represent the work product of an attorney-client relationship;
- (b) (7) investigatory records compiled for law enforcement purposes, the disclosure of which would:
 - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of another person;
 - (D) reveal the identity of an individual who has furnished information to the FBI under confidential circumstances or reveal information furnished only by



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Dep. AD Inv. _____
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Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

1 - The Deputy Attorney General
Attention: _____

kmb:car (6)

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NOT RECORDED

7 MAR 25 1976

SEE NOTE PAGE 3976

JUN 22 1976

TELETYPE UNIT ☐

ORIGINAL FILED IN 74-67846-1

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such a person and not apparently known to the public or otherwise accessible to the FBI by overt means;

(E) disclose investigative techniques and procedures, thereby impairing their future effectiveness.

A review of our files has revealed the following documents which originated with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission:

1. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) News Release U-11 dated January 6, 1975;
2. AEC News Release U-12 dated January 7, 1974;
3. AEC Report of Inspection during period November 21-22, 1974, and December 5-6, 1974;
4. AEC Investigative Report 74-09; and
5. AEC Division of Inspection Report 44-2-339.

These items are being referred to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for its decision and it will correspond directly with you.

Our files also contain photographs of Karen Silkwood's car and the accident scene. These photographs are currently being reproduced and copies will be sent to you at the earliest possible date.

Sincerely yours,

Clarence M. Kelley
Director

Enclosures (23)

[REDACTED]

NOTE: Documents being released in accordance with the stipulation of counsel in connection with the pending litigation captioned National Public Radio, et al., v. Edward H. Levi. Documents being released from 159-4005 after consultation with Legal Counsel Division. Departmental Attorney

[REDACTED] Civil Division, and other Departmental representatives support without reservation our position with regard to obtaining notarized authorization from next of kin of the deceased subject of an FOIA request. However, in this case presently being litigated USDC, WDC, the deceased has regularly placed herself in the public arena seeking publicity. The case has enjoyed substantial notoriety including a Congressional inquiry. None of the documents being released herewith contain any personal, intimate data which might cause embarrassment to the next of kin. It is merely an investigation into her death as opposed to a case wherein she is subject of an investigation by the FBI. Considering all facts, Greenspan advised that discretionary release is most appropriate and in no way jeopardizes our basic requirement for written authorization from next of kin. An affidavit signed by SA [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was filed in USDC, WDC, 3/15/76, wherein it was stated that these documents would be released to plaintiff's attorney pursuant to stipulation, supra. Cost for duplication will be billed with next letter forwarding photographs.

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 Director Sec'y _____

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SILKWOOD 11-12

BY KEY BERTHNY
 CRESCENT, OKLA. (UPI) -- KAREN SILKWOOD, A WORKER CONTAMINATED
 WITH RADIOACTIVE PLUTONIUM, LEFT THE KERR-MCGEE NUCLEAR PLANT TO MEET
 WITH A REPORTER ABOUT ALLEGED SAFETY HAZARDS. SHE NEVER MADE THAT
 MEETING A YEAR AGO TODAY.

HER COMPACT CAR WEERED OFF THE DARK, LONELY HIGHWAY TWO MILES
 SOUTH OF THE PLANT AND CRASHED INTO A CULVERT.

NOW THE GIANT PLANT IS CLOSING. OFFICIALS SAY THE SHUTDOWN, WHICH
 WILL BE COMPLETE BY THE END OF THE YEAR, WAS CAUSED BY LACK OF
 BUSINESS, BUT SOME CRESCENT RESIDENTS BELIEVE THE PUBLICITY RESULTED
 FROM MISS SILKWOOD'S DEATH PLAYED A PART IN THE DECISION.

MISS SILKWOOD, 28, WAS EN ROUTE TO A MEETING WITH A UNION OFFI-
 CIAL AND A NEW YORK TIMES REPORTER IN OKLAHOMA CITY WHEN THE CRASH
 OCCURRED.

HER DEATH STARTED INVESTIGATIONS BY THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION,
 THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND
 A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR HIRED BY THE OIL, CHEMICAL AND ATOMIC WORKERS
 UNION.

THE FBI SAID THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF FOUL PLAY, BUT THE NATIONAL
 ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN HAS ASKED THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO REOPEN ITS
 INVESTIGATION.

MISS SILKWOOD HAD TESTIFIED IN WASHINGTON AGAINST ALLEGED SAFETY
 HAZARDS AT THE PLANT, WHICH PROCESSED PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM.

SHE LATER WAS CONTAMINATED WITH AIRBORNE PLUTONIUM DUST AND WENT
 TO LOS ALAMOS, N.M., FOR TESTS, RETURNING ONE DAY BEFORE HER DEATH.

THE OCAU PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR CONTENDED HER CAR WAS FORCED OFF THE
 ROAD AND CITED A DENT ON THE REAR FENDER.

HOWEVER, STATE INVESTIGATORS SAID SHE PROBABLY FELL ASLEEP AT THE
 WHEEL WHILE SEDATED WITH METHAQUALONE AND SAID THE DENT PROBABLY WAS
 MADE BY A WRECKER.

NOV 13 2 50 PM '75

159-4005-A
 NOT RECORDED
 98 DEC 4 1975

66 DEC 8 1975

WASHINGTON CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

THE AEC INVESTIGATION FOUND FOUR VIOLATIONS OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, BUT COMMISSION OFFICIALS SAID NONE WOULD HAVE ENDANGERED EMPLOYEES OR THE PUBLIC.

KERR-MCGEE OFFICIALS SAID THE PLANT FAILED TO GET SUFFICIENT CONTRACT RENEWALS, BUT SOME CRESCENT RESIDENTS FEEL THE SILKWOOD INCIDENT AFFECTED THE DECISION.

"MY PERSONAL OPINION IS THAT PLANT NEEDED TO BE CLOSED DUE TO THAT PROBLEM THEY HAD WITH THIS GIRL GETTING KILLED AND SO FORTH. THEY NEEDED TO CLEAN HOUSE AND START ALL OVER AGAIN," SAID LARRY STOEN, A RESIDENT GRO.

CRESCENT MAYOR BILLY "BUDDY" JOHNSON, OWNER OF THE CITY CAFE, SAID HE FELT THERE WAS TOO MUCH PRESSURE FROM OUTSIDERS. "THE NEWS MEDIA AND STUFF LIKE THAT. IT WAS JUST A LOT OF BAD PUBLICITY FOR KERR-MCGEE."

UPI 11-13 1972 AEC

A-2

2/25/76

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (117-2702)
(Attn: INTD)

FROM: SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (117-51) (C)

UNSUB;
UNAUTHORIZED POSSESSION OF
PLUTONIUM RESULTING IN THE
CONTAMINATION OF KAREN G.
SILKWOOD (DECEASED).

[REDACTED] AND [REDACTED]
KERR MC GEE CORPORATION (KMC),
NUCLEAR PRODUCTS DIVISION,
CIMARRON FACILITY, CRESCENT,
OKLAHOMA
AEA
CO: OKLAHOMA CITY

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For the information of the Bureau, on 2/24/76, during the course of liaison contact with Kerr McGee Corporation (KMC) in regard to the contingency plan in effect for their Cimarron Nuclear Facility, it was ascertained that the company had been contacted the previous day by a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) representative, who in part advised the company that it was his agency's understanding that Senate hearings in regard to the overall SILKWOOD situations would start in Washington, D. C. on or about 4/1/76.

The above is being provided Bureau for completion of Bureau files.

3 - Bureau
(2 - 117-2702)
(1 - 159-4005)
2 - Oklahoma City
(1 - 117-51)
(1 - 159-45)
LJO:mbs (5)

157-4005-
NOT RECORDED
183 MAR 2 1976

ORIGINAL FILED IN

Date: April 1, 1976

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To:

[redacted] Chief Attn: Mr. Moschella
Field Support and Enforcement Branch
Office of Inspection and Enforcement
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

From: Clarence M. Kelley, Director

Subject: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) REQUEST
OF BARBARA NEWMAN CONCERNING THE DEATH OF
KAREN SILKWOOD

In responding to a Freedom of Information Act request, our search revealed five documents which originated with your agency. A list of these documents is being attached along with a copy of Ms. Newman's request.

The enclosed is being referred to your office for a decision as to whether they should or should not be released pursuant to FOIA. The requester has been advised of this referral.

Please direct your prompt reply to [redacted]
[redacted] in care of her attorney, [redacted]
2005 L Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

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Enclosures (2)

EX-104

REC-23

159-4005-54

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.:
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
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Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Legal Coun. _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

Note: Documents being referred are from Bufile 159-4005.

MAILED 10
APR 1 1976
FBI
1 - The Deputy Attorney General
Attention: [redacted]

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b7C

6 APR 2 1976

kmb:neb (6)

MAIL ROOM ☒

TELETYPE UNIT ☐

100
National Public Radio

2025 M Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20036

202-785-5400

May 1, 1975

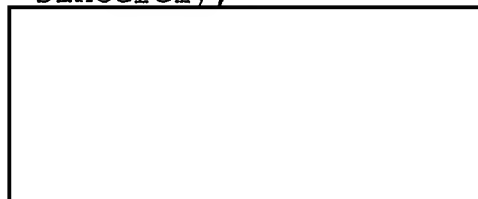
Hon. Harold R. Tyler
Deputy Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
Constitution Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Tyler:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, I request to see the documents in connection with the determination by the Justice Department that its investigation into the circumstances of Karen Silkwood's death is concluded and that Miss Silkwood's death did not indicate any violation of Federal law. I am also requesting any statements, charges or documents pertaining to the two other aspects of the case still under investigation by your department. Specifically, whether Miss Silkwood's rights as a union member were violated and the possible illegal possession of plutonium.

I look forward to hearing from you about these matters as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,



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BN/pw

ENCLOSURE

159-4005-54

AEC News Release #U-11, dated 1-6-75

AEC News Release #U-12, dated 1-7-74

AEC Report of Inspection during period 11/21-22/74
and 12/5-6/74

AEC Investigative Report #74-09

AEC Division of Inspection Report 44-2-339

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Gallagher

DATE: 4/29/76

FROM : L. E. Rhyne

SUBJECT: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED)
LABOR MANAGEMENT REPORTING
AND DISCLOSURE ACT
OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

1 - Mr. Callahan
1 - Mr. Adams
1 - Mr. Gallagher
1 - Mr. O'Connell
1 - Mr. Rhyne
1 - Mr. Yelvington

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir. _____
Admin. _____
Comp. Syst. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
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Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

PURPOSE: This is in response to the notation "What about this?" written by the Director on a UPI release dated 4/26/76, attached, concerning captioned matter.

REG-94 157-4555
SYNOPSIS: On 11/21/74, a Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) - Obstruction of Justice (OOJ) investigation was instituted by our Oklahoma City Office upon receipt of a request dated 11/20/74, from the Criminal Division of the Department. This request was based on allegations that the death of Karen Gay Silkwood, who died in a one car accident on 11/13/74, was other than accidental. The Department advised if these allegations were substantiated a possible violation of Section 530, Title 29, USC, (through the impairment of Silkwood's rights as a union member guaranteed by Section 411, Title 29, USC) and Section 1505, Title 18, USC, (in that Silkwood was a witness in a pending investigation before the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)) would exist. A thorough investigation was conducted and no information was developed indicating the death of Silkwood was other than accidental. An autopsy indicated Silkwood was under the influence of a drug (methaqualone) at the time of her death. The amount of the drug found in Silkwood's system subsequent to her death would indicate that she was under the influence of the drug at the time of her death and was drowsy or sleepy. Silkwood was a member of the local Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) which was deeply embroiled in negotiations with Management of Kerr-McGee Nuclear Facility where Silkwood was employed. There had been allegations by the local union that certain safety regulations were being violated by the company and Silkwood reportedly gathered some documentation to support the allegations and was in possession of these documents on the evening of 11/13/74. Investigation by Oklahoma City failed to disclose any evidence that Silkwood carried with her any documentation of health and

ENCLOSURE

Attachment

JHY:pms (7)

6-40486
CONTINUED - OVER

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

MAY 2 1976

MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED)

safety violations on the evening of 11/13/74, or that these particular documents existed. Results of all investigation in this matter were furnished to the Management and Labor Section, Criminal Division, Department of Justice. The Department determined that there was no specific indication of a violation of Federal criminal law in the death of Silkwood and terminated this investigation.

RECOMMENDATION: For information.

APPROVED: *[Signature]*
Assoc. Dir. *[Signature]*
Dep. AD Adm. *[Signature]*
Dep. AD Inv. *[Signature]*
Asst. Dir.:
Admin. *[Signature]*

Comp. Syst.	Laboratory.....
Ext. Affairs.....	Legal Coun.....
Gen. Inv. <i>[Signature]</i>	Plan. & Eval.....
Ident.	Rec. Mgmt.....
Inspection.....	Sec. Inv.....
Intell.	Training.....

7 DETAILS: On 11/21/74, LMRDA - OOJ investigation was instituted by our Oklahoma City Office upon receipt of a request dated 11/20/74, from the Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice. This request was based on an article appearing in the New York Times on 11/19/74, and a telegram received by the Attorney General from the OCAW on the same date suggesting that the death of Karen Gay Silkwood, who died in a one car accident on 11/13/74, was caused by Silkwood's automobile being hit from behind by another vehicle causing it to run off the road. The Department advised that if these allegations were substantiated a possible violation of Section 530, Title 29, USC, (through the impairment of Silkwood's rights as a union member guaranteed Section 411, Title 29, USC) and Section 1505, Title 18, USC, (in that Silkwood was a witness in a pending investigation before the AEC) would exist.

A thorough investigation was conducted in this matter and no information was developed indicating the death of Silkwood was other than accidental. An autopsy, which was performed on Silkwood indicated she was under the influence of a drug (methaqualone) at the time of her death. The chief medical examiner, Board of Medicolegal, Oklahoma City, advised this drug is a sleep-inducing drug. The amount found in Silkwood's system subsequent to her death would indicate that she was under the influence of the drug at the time of her death and was drowsy or sleepy.

Silkwood was a member of the local OCAW which was deeply embroiled in negotiations with Management of Kerr-McGee Nuclear Facility where Silkwood was employed. There

MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (DECEASED)

had been allegations by the local union that certain safety regulations were being violated by the company and Silkwood reportedly gathered some documentation to support the allegations and was in possession of these documents on the evening of 11/13/74. Investigation by Oklahoma City failed to disclose any evidence that Silkwood carried with her any documentation of health and safety violations on the evening of 11/13/74, or that these particular documents existed. Results of all investigation in this matter were furnished to the Management and Labor Section, Criminal Division, Department of Justice. The Department determined that there was no specific indication of a violation of Federal criminal law in the death of Silkwood and terminated this investigation.

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 Telephone Rm. _____
 Director Sec'y _____

A040

D W

PX-SILKWOOD SKED 4-25
 EDITORS: SUBCOMMITTEE STARTS AT 10 AM EDT

BY SARA FRITZ

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THOUGH A HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE IS BEGINNING AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF A UNION WOMAN PROBING SAFETY FEATURES AT AN OKLAHOMA PLUTONIUM PLANT, THE FBI HAS QUIETLY CLOSED ITS BOOKS ON THE CASE.

THE FBI MADE NO ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT HAD ENDED ITS INVESTIGATION OF KAREN SILKWOOD'S DEATH NOV. 13, 1974 -- AS SHE WAS LOOKING INTO QUESTIONS OF SAFETY AT THE KERR-MCGEE PLUTONIUM PLANT IN OKLAHOMA.

AND INVESTIGATORS FOR THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT SAID THEY TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO OBTAIN MANY FBI RECORDS ON HER AUTO CRASH DEATH.

THEY SAID THE HEARINGS WILL SHOW A "LACK OF FOLLOW THROUGH" WHICH RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE FBI AND OTHER AGENCIES TO RESPOND TO HEALTH AND SAFETY VIOLATIONS AT NUCLEAR FACILITIES.

COMMITTEE STAFFER PETER STOCKWOOD SAID THE KERR-MCGEE PROBE HAS RAISED "SERIOUS QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT IS EQUIPPED TO HANDLE THE IMPACT OF THE ENORMOUS INCREASE IN THE USE OF PLUTONIUM" EXPECTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE FBI PREVIOUSLY REPORTED DROPPING ITS INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH ITSELF, AFTER FINDING NO EVIDENCE OF FOUL PLAY. MISS SILKWOOD, WHO HERSELF HAD BEEN CONTAMINATED, DIED ENROUTE TO A MEETING WITH A NEW YORK TIMES REPORTER. THE MATERIAL SHE HAD COLLECTED AT THE KERR-MCGEE PLANT WAS NEVER FOUND.

BUT THE FBI HAD SAID IT WAS STILL INVESTIGATING TWO OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CASE -- THE DISAPPEARANCE OF 400 POUNDS OF PLUTONIUM AND CHARGES OF ILLEGAL COMPANY INTERFERENCE IN UNION ACTIVITIES.

UPI LEARNED THAT THOSE TWO PARTS OF THE INVESTIGATION ALSO HAVE BEEN CLOSED, WITH NO ACTION TAKEN. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WITNESSES ARE EXPECTED TO REPORT THAT DEVELOPMENT DURING THE SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS CHAIRED BY REP. JOHN D. DINGELL, D-MICH.

SUBCOMMITTEE STAFFERS SAID THEY RECEIVED "VERY LIMITED" AND "HIGHLY SANITIZED" RECORDS FROM THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DURING THEIR INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE. THE ONLY DOCUMENT THE SUBCOMMITTEE RECEIVED FROM THE FBI WAS A "SUMMARY" OF THE INVESTIGATION.

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN MEANWHILE HAS CHARGED THAT SENS. LEE METCALF, D-MONT., AND ABRAHAM RIBICOFF, D-CONN., RENEGED ON A PROMISE THE SENATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE WOULD HOLD HEARINGS INTO THE SILKWOOD CASE.

NOW SAID SENATE HEARINGS WERE CANCELED AFTER METCALF RECEIVED A VIST FROM DEAN MCGEE, PRESIDENT OF THE KERR-MCGEE PLANT. A COMMITTEE AIDE SAID THE SENATORS WERE SIMPLY TOO BUSY AND DECIDED TO RELY ON THE HOUSE HEARINGS.

UPI 04-25 04:24 AED

WASHINGTON CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

6-428127
 FBI/DOJ

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM : SAC, OKLAHOMA CITY (159-45) E

SUBJECT: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased);
ET AL;
LMRDA;OOJ.
OO:Oklahoma City

DATE: 5/11/76

Enclosed for the Bureau is one xerox copy of news article from the Woodward Daily Press, Woodward, Oklahoma dated 5/6/76.

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On 5/7/76, Assistant District Attorney [redacted] Woodward, Oklahoma advised that he had read an article in the Woodward Daily Press, Woodward, Oklahoma on 5/6/76 which suggested that [redacted] may have knowledge of "the Silkwood matter". He stated that he felt that COOK did not have any such knowledge.

[redacted] explained that [redacted] has been charged in Woodward, Oklahoma with Second Degree Murder, after shooting CLAUSSON JONES in Woodward, Oklahoma on 1/29/76. He explained that [redacted], who was at that time employed as an oil field worker for Woodward Service Company, shot and killed JONES when JONES came to [redacted] residence to take him to work. COOK fired from inside the living room of his residence, striking JONES, who was seated in a truck in the driveway of [redacted] residence.

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[redacted] then proceeded to the Woodward, Oklahoma office of Woodward Service Company where he shot himself in the jaw with the rifle. When [redacted] was initially approached after the shooting, he was said to have used his blood to write the initials "AEC" on the wall of the company office.

[redacted] advised that his Department's investigation has determined that a fellow employee, [redacted] was to have picked [redacted] up and taken him to work on that date, rather than JONES, and that it is his opinion that [redacted] killed the wrong man. [redacted] stated that in view of the above, he felt that [redacted] was actually trying to write this on the wall when he placed the initials "AEC" in that location, and that the letters stand for [redacted], rather than ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION. He stated that this is supported by [redacted] later statement at the

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2-Bureau (Enc. 1)

2-Oklahoma City

HJW:ddw

(4)

REC-92



56 MAY 25 1976

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

OC 159-45

hospital on the same date, at which time, he made a comment to the effect that the doctors must "keep him (JONES)" alive.

It is noted that the above referenced article stated that COOK and SILKWOOD had been co-workers at the Kerr-McGee nuclear plant at Crescent, Oklahoma, however, COOK left this employment after developing a strong hatred for SILKWOOD.

UACB, no action being taken on above by Oklahoma City.

ONE ENCLOSURE TO BUREAU WITH OKLAHOMA CITY LETTER

DATED. 5/11/76:

RE: UNSUBS;
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD (Deceased)
ET AL;
LMRDA;OOJ.
OO:OC

Enclosed for Bureau is 1 xerox of news article from
Woodward Daily Press, Woodward, Okla. dated 5/6/76.

2-9



159-4005-56

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Suspect Former Silkwood Co-Worker

By VANCE HORNE
Staff Writer

John Thomas Cook, charged in Woodward with second degree murder of Clausson Jones on January 29, was at one time a close co-worker of Karen Silkwood at the Kerr-McGee nuclear plant at Crescent. It has been learned.

At Kerr-McGee, Cook started a strong personal dispute with Silkwood which he gave as his reason for leaving his job with the company, according to former fellow workers of Cook and Silkwood at the now deactivated nuclear plant.

One of their fellow co-workers said Cook "just really blew up over Karen," and that Cook said he was morally forced to leave Kerr-McGee because Silkwood was an immoral influence. The incident with Silkwood happened in late 1972.

Karen Silkwood, Cook's former laboratory partner at Kerr-McGee, is the central character in the "Silkwood case," involving alleged safety hazards at the nuclear plant, about which she gave testimony in 1974 to the Atomic Energy Commission, shortly before her death in an automobile accident.

Testimony in Cook's April 30 preliminary hearing for murder indicated the possibility that the Atomic Energy Commission and

his own past associations with Kerr-McGee were in his mind when he allegedly murdered Clausson Jones in Woodward on January 29, and then shot himself in an apparent attempt at suicide.

The testimony in Cook's hearing was that he had used his own blood to write the letters A E C on the wall of a building shortly after he had been asked his possible motives for a murder.

The Atomic Energy Commission, which was divided into two new agencies last year, was commonly known as the AEC.

Cook has reportedly made no comment on the meaning of the letters A E C since he wrote them on January 29. Before the April 30 hearing, the incident involving the letters had not been released to the public.

Six of Cook's former co-workers at Kerr-McGee learned of the incident following the preliminary hearing, and all said they believed the letters A E C could only stand for Atomic Energy Commission in Cook's mind.

Cook's former Kerr-McGee co-workers said that to their knowledge Cook had never had important dealings with the AEC, and they were at a loss to explain why he would write the letters in blood after allegedly committing

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

1 Woodward Daily
Express
Woodward, Okla.

Date: May 6, 1976

Edition: Daily

Author: Vance Horne

Editor: Clark Lawrence

Title: Karen G. Silkwood; Kerr Mc Gee Corp., Oklahoma

Character: City, Okla.

or

Classification: 159-45

Submitting Office: Okla. City

☐ Being Investigated

murder and shooting himself.

They confirmed however that the names Karen Silkwood and Atomic Energy Commission were strongly connected in their minds, and they made reference to the publicity surrounding Silkwood's death in a car accident after she reported alleged Kerr-McGee safety violations to the AEC.

Three of Cook's fellow co-workers at Kerr-McGee spontaneously offered, however, that Silkwood and Cook were connected in their minds because of bad feeling Cook had expressed toward Silkwood.

According to their memories, Cook had become convinced that Silkwood was at the center of what he considered an "immoral" atmosphere in the laboratory where he and Silkwood worked side by side as technicians.

Cook "quit his job in a personal controversy over (the rate of) divorces at Kerr-McGee. Karen Silkwood was the one this was really all about," recalled one fellow worker.

Cook started talk among his fellow workers of what he saw as "immorality" centering on Silkwood because she was a divorced woman and he did not approve of divorce, the worker recalled.

"The last few weeks he (Cook) was there, he was very strange and would get very upset about little things concerning his job," he said.

"He just finally went off the deep end about Silkwood, the former co-worker said, adding that this was unusual behavior for Cook who ordinarily was quiet and hardworking.

Since the time Cook left Kerr-McGee, no one has reported any connection between him and Silkwood or Kerr-McGee, though one fellow co-worker did say that he had talked to Cook a year after he had quit his job and believed Cook was "despondent" about leaving Kerr-McGee.

"I felt he thought he had done the right thing in quitting, but on the other hand wished he still had the job," said the co-worker, who remembered that Cook had said he felt forced to quit because of Silkwood and what he considered her "immoral" influence.

"He really got on Karen," he added.

Claussion Jones, who Cook allegedly murdered, had no known connection with the AEC, Kerr-McGee, or with Karen Silkwood.

Cook reportedly killed Jones by firing a rifle at him from the window of his living room while Jones was sitting in a pickup in Cook's driveway with the intention of giving Cook a ride to work. Jones was a driller for Woodward Service, and Cook was an oil field hand who often worked under Jones for Woodward Service.

On January 29, the service

company had told Cook that Jones would drive to Cook's house to give him a ride to a job site.

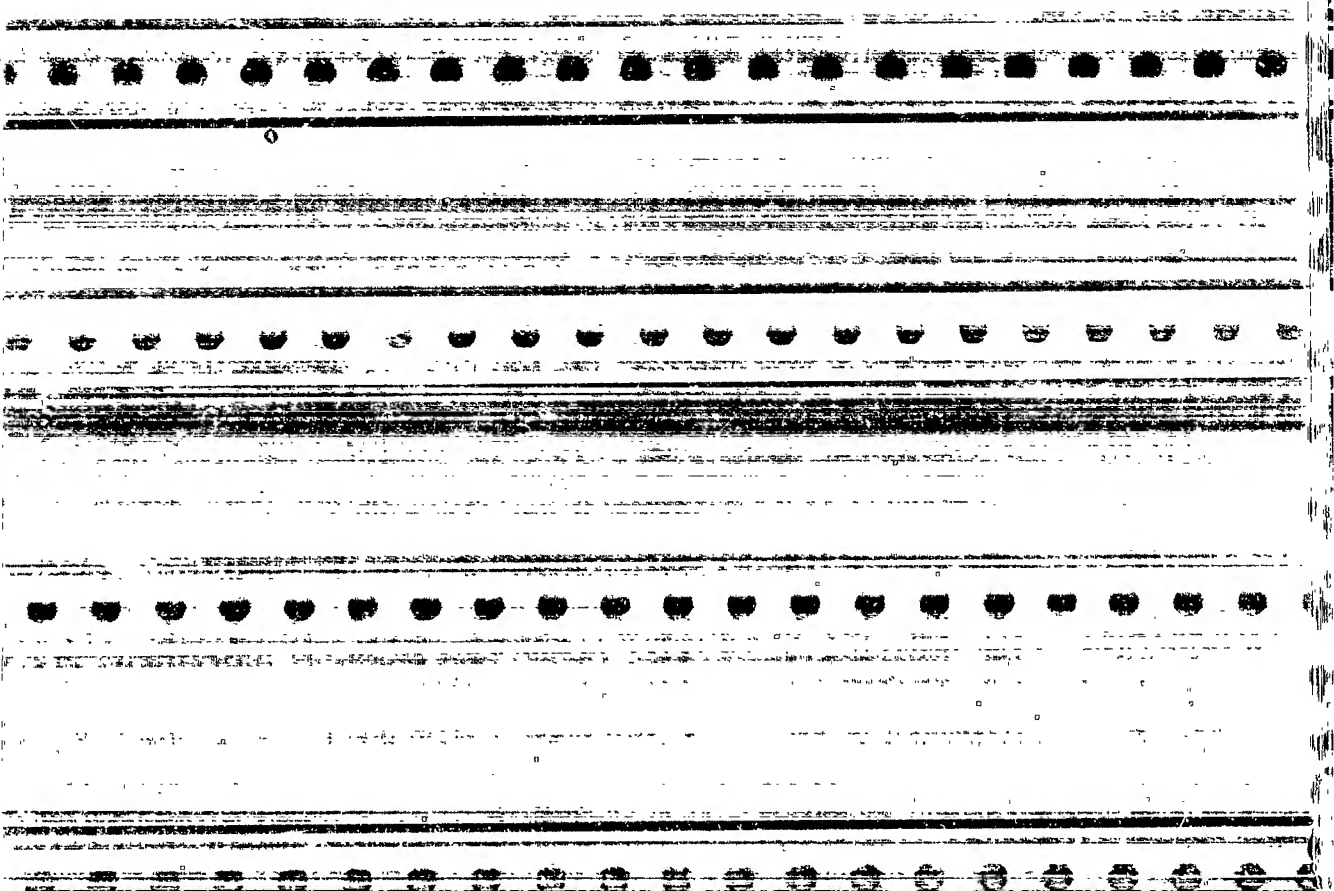
As soon as Jones arrived, Cook allegedly shot him, then drove to Woodward Service offices where he shot himself.

The first person to talk to Cook after the alleged shooting was George Beverly, superintendant for Woodward Service who accompanied a Woodward policeman to the company offices.

In Cook's preliminary hearing, Beverly said that after he had asked Cook why he might have committed a murder, Cook shrugged his shoulders, and shortly thereafter used his blood to write A E C on the outside wall of the company offices.

Cook is currently in Woodward county jail on \$100,000 bond.

159-4005-56



CULVERT ^{NORTH}
from ~~south~~ BANK

159-105-

LD
12/3/74

1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
1 - Mr. R. J. Gallagher
1 - Mr. T. W. Leavitt
1 - Congressional Liaison
1 - Mr. S. S. Mignosa
1 - Mr. R. K. McHargue

May 20, 1976

EX-101

159-4005-57

Honorable Hiram L. Fong
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Fong:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 7, 1976, with enclosures, requesting information in regard to this Bureau's investigation regarding the death of Karen Silkwood. The enclosure is being returned to you as requested.

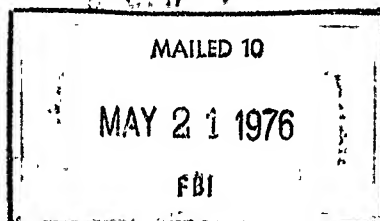
Karen Silkwood was an employee of the Kerr McGee Nuclear Corporation located in Crescent, Oklahoma, and was active in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW). On November 5, 1974, Miss Silkwood claimed to have become contaminated by plutonium through faulty safety procedures in effect at Kerr McGee. On the evening of November 13, 1974, Silkwood was killed in a one car automobile accident following her attendance at an OCAW meeting.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has conducted lengthy investigations into the events surrounding Miss Silkwood's death, her contamination, and the allegations of illegal company interference in a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) investigation at the Kerr McGee facility. This Bureau also conducted a related investigation which concerned the scattering of uranium fuel pellets at Kerr McGee. The results of these investigations were submitted to the Department of Justice for consideration and no further investigation is being conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation at this time.

The enclosure to your letter indicates that the Federal Bureau of Investigation was continuing to investigate the disappearance of 400 pounds of plutonium from the Kerr McGee facility. This Bureau has never investigated the

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RKM:ddcdlc
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SEE NOTE PAGE 2

XEROX

JUN 2 1976

GPO : 1975-O-594-120

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Honorable Hiram L. Fong

disappearance of 400 pounds of plutonium from Kerr McGee. In the event you wish additional information, it is suggested you communicate with the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice.

Sincerely yours,

C. M. Kelley

Clarence M. Kelley
Director

Enclosure

1 - Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division

NOTE:

By letter dated 4/29/76, a constituent of Senator Fong's furnished the Senator a copy of a United Press International article which states that the FBI has closed a three prong investigation stemming from the death of Silkwood. The article also stated that the FBI said that it would continue investigating two other aspects of the case, the disappearance of 400 pounds of plutonium and charges of illegal company interference in union activity. Along with the article, the constituent noted that he hoped there was an error in the article since 400 pounds of plutonium would make a dozen atom bombs. It is noted that a House subcommittee investigation has been looking into the Silkwood investigations and the case Agent from Oklahoma City has testified before subcommittee staff concerning his investigations of the Silkwood contamination and related matters. The above letter has been coordinated with SA [redacted] of the General Investigative Division and SA [redacted] of Congressional Affairs-Legal Counsel Division.

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APPROVED:

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. *med* _____
Asst. Dir.: _____
Adm. Serv. _____

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United States Senate

May 7, 1976


Ltr frm:

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M. Goldman Consultants
43 E. Lanikaula Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Respectfully referred to:

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Congressional Liaison Office
J. Edgar Hoover Building
Washington, D. C. 20535



Because of the desire of this office to be responsive to all inquiries and communications, your consideration of the attached is requested. Your findings and views, in duplicate form, along with return of the enclosure, will be appreciated by

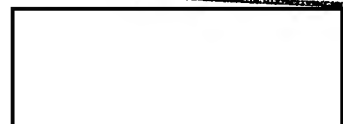


Hiram L. Fong
U.S.S.

HLF:ckcc
Enclosure
Form #2

MT 13

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EX-101 REC-33 159-4005-57

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CORRESPONDENCE

XEROX
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Let to Sen. Fong
1 enc RKM:ddc
5-7-76

1- ST

Chen

M. GOLDMAN CONSULTANTS

43 E. Lanikaula Street Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Phone 961-6139

April 27, 1976 9:44

Senator Fong
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Fong:

I hope there is an error in the enclaved
article (Hon. Adv., April 26, 1976) since
400 lbs. of plutonium is enough material
to make a dozen ATOM BOMBS.
Is this material really missing?

washington

Silkwood probe closed by FBI



Silkwood: Hearings on

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The FBI quietly initiated a three-pronged investigation stemming from the death of Karen Silkwood, a union activist who was questioning safety at the Kerr-McGee plutonium plant in Oklahoma, it was learned yesterday.

The action came as House subcommittee investigators tried without success to obtain many FBI records on the case before hearings begin today.

Congressional investigators said the hearings will show that a "lack of follow-through" by the FBI and other agencies in the case raises questions about the ability of the government to respond to health and safety violations at nuclear facilities.

The FBI previously reported that it dropped its investigation into the November 1974 death of Silkwood in a car accident after finding no evidence of foul play.

Silkwood died en route to a meeting with a New York Times reporter. Her material collected at the Kerr-McGee plant was never found.

But the FBI said at the time that it would continue investigating two other aspects of the case — disappearance of 400 pounds of plutonium and charges of

A. L. K.

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ENCLOSURE

159-4005-27

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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Director Sec'y _____

TO : Mr. Gallagher

DATE: 5/17/76

FROM : L. E. Rhyne

SUBJECT: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD
(DECEASED)
LABOR MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND
DISCLOSURE ACT
OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

1 - Mr. Callahan
1 - Mr. Adams
1 - Mr. Gallagher
1 - Mr. O'Connell
1 - Mr. Rhyne
1 - Mr. Yelvington
1 - Mr. Leavitt

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to furnish results of investigation conducted by the Oklahoma City Office into the death of Karen G. Silkwood.

SYNOPSIS: On 11/21/74, a Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA)-Obstruction of Justice (OOJ) investigation was instituted by our Oklahoma City Office upon receipt of a request dated 11/20/74, from the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), Criminal Division, Department of Justice. This request was based on an article appearing in the "New York Times" on 11/19/74, and a telegram received by the Attorney General (AG) from the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) on the same date suggesting that the death of Karen G. Silkwood, who died in a one-car accident on 11/13/74, was caused by Silkwood's automobile being hit from behind by another vehicle causing it to run off the road. The Department advised that if these allegations were substantiated, a possible violation of Section 530, Title 29, U. S. Code (USC) (through the impairment of Silkwood's rights as a union member guaranteed by Section 411, Title 29, USC) and Section 1505, Title 18, USC (in that Silkwood was a witness in a pending investigation before the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)) would exist.

A thorough investigation was conducted in this matter and no information was developed indicating the death of Silkwood was other than accidental. An autopsy, which was performed on Silkwood, indicated she was under the influence of a drug (methaqualone) at the time of her death. The Chief Medical Examiner, Board of Medicolegal, Oklahoma City, advised this drug is a sleep-inducing drug. The amount found in Silkwood's system subsequent to her death would indicate that she was under the influence of the drug at the time of her death and was drowsy or sleepy.

8 MAY 25 1976

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CONTINUED - OVER



5010-108

56 JUN 08 1976

Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD

The results of all investigation conducted relative to the LMRDA-OOJ violation were furnished to the Criminal Division, Department of Justice. The Criminal Division determined that on the basis of the facts produced there was no significant indication of a violation of Federal criminal law in the death of Silkwood.

RECOMMENDATION: For information.

LCR
g/kv

APPROVED: _____	Ext. Affairs.....	Laboratory.....
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Dep. AD Inv.....	Ident.....	Rec. Mgmt.....
Asst. Dir.: _____	Inspection.....	Spec. Inv.....
Adm. Serv.....	Intell.....	Training.....

DETAILS: By memorandum dated 11/20/74, the Criminal Division, Department of Justice, requested investigation into the death of Karen Gay Silkwood. This request was based on an article appearing in the New York Times on 11/19/74, and a telegram received by the Attorney General from the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) on the same date suggesting that the death of Karen Gay Silkwood who died in a one-car accident on 11/13/74, was caused by Silkwood's automobile being hit from behind by another vehicle causing it to run off the road. The Department advised that if these allegations were substantiated a possible violation of Section 530, Title 29, USC, (through the impairment of Silkwood's rights as a union member guaranteed by Section 411, Title 29, USC) and Section 1505, Title 18, USC, (in that Silkwood was a witness in a pending investigation before the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)) would exist. Immediate investigation was instituted by the Oklahoma City Office on 11/21/74.

Silkwood was an employee of the Kerr-McGee Corporation Nuclear Products Division Facility at Crescent, Oklahoma, which facility is in part a plutonium fuel plant. She was a member of the OCAW and a member of the local OCAW bargaining committee which was at this time deeply embroiled in contract negotiations at Kerr-McGee Nuclear Facility Management. There had been allegations by the local that certain AEC safety regulations were being violated by the company. In addition, Silkwood allegedly had information regarding alleged falsification of certain plutonium fuel rod quality control records and she had reportedly gathered some documents to support the allegations.

Silkwood was found to be contaminated by plutonium while at work on 11/5/74. As a result of this contamination incident, she was decontaminated. On 11/6/74, it was discovered that she

CONTINUED - OVER

MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD

was again contaminated at work. She was thereafter decontaminated. On 11/7/74, immediately upon her arrival at work, Silkwood was checked and found to be contaminated again. This was prior to her having an opportunity to enter a work area in the plutonium plant. A check of her apartment in Edmond, Oklahoma, determined that her apartment was also contaminated. Because of the November contamination incident, Silkwood had been placed on a daily schedule of submitting urine and fecal samples. Prior to this time she had been on a weekly schedule because of a previous contamination incident. During the period 11/10-12/74, Silkwood and her roommate [redacted] and her boyfriend, [redacted] were sent to the Los Alamos, Scientific Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico, for examination. Silkwood and her companions returned to Oklahoma 11/12/74.

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Investigation determined that on 11/13/74, Silkwood attended a union contract negotiation session and was so engaged until approximately 3:30 p.m. Following this session she was interviewed by employees of the AEC concerning her recent contamination. Following her meeting with employees of the AEC, she attended a union meeting at the Hub Cafe in Crescent, Oklahoma. According to certain individuals in attendance at this meeting at the Hub Cafe, Silkwood appeared to be upset about her contamination problem and started crying during the course of the meeting. Two individuals in attendance at this meeting were concerned about her and felt that she was in no condition to drive from Crescent to her residence and offered to drive her home, which offer she refused.

Silkwood left the meeting at approximately 7:00 p.m., to go to the Holiday Inn at Oklahoma City to meet with [redacted] Legislative Assistant for the OCAW and [redacted] an investigative reporter for the New York Times. The purported reason for this meeting was Silkwood's concern over violation of safety regulations at the company and her concern with alleged falsification of certain plutonium rod quality control records. None of the other local OCAW members at this session knew that Silkwood had arranged this meeting with Wodka and Bornham nor what the meeting concerned.

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Silkwood was killed in a one car accident at approximately 7:30 p.m. on 11/13/74. Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper [redacted] was the investigating officer, and he advised he arrived at the scene of the accident at about 8:15 p.m. The accident involved a 1973 white Honda Civic two door Sedan. He checked the occupant of the vehicle, later identified as Silkwood and determined that she appeared to be dead. It was necessary to pop the door with a porta power tool before Silkwood's body could be removed from the wreck. The car was equipped with both shoulder and lap belts which were not

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MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD

in use at the time of the accident. Investigation failed to reveal any witnesses who actually observed the accident. His investigation determined that the car was south bound on State Highway 74. He estimated that the car was traveling 50-55 m.p.h. before impact. He estimates the car speed at time of impact to be 40-45 m.p.h. The car ran off the east side of the roadway leaving the road at a very shallow angle, entered the east barditch and traveled some 255 feet in the ditch. The car struck the north side of the north retaining wall of the culvert, which crosses the highway in an east west direction. The point at which the retaining wall was struck was three feet from the face of the culvert. The car thereafter became airborne for about 24 feet, traveling across the opening of the culvert, struck the north side of the south retaining wall at a point about three feet from the face of the bridge and about three feet above ground level. There were no skid marks at any point along the path of the vehicle either on the road or in the barditch. At a point just before impact the tracks appeared to turn slightly west and toward the road. There were no skid marks at any point and the tracks along the barditch were very well defined. There was no indication that the driver was fighting for control of the car. [] concluded that the driver had fallen asleep. b6 b7C

The first individuals on the scene of the accident were two men and a boy of 14. These three were traveling in two vehicles, a pickup truck and a flatbed truck. The driver of the flatbed truck observed the wreck and both trucks stopped to investigate. After determining that the crashed vehicle was occupied, one of the men left the scene to call the state police. Shortly thereafter, Trooper [] arrived followed by an ambulance. These individuals assisted in the removal of the body from the car. One of these individuals, [] noticed that the tracks in the barditch left by the accident vehicle were straight and he stated that it appeared to him that the driver of the wrecked car made no effort to break or change the direction of the car until a couple of feet in front of the culvert wall. b6 b7C

No one at the scene observed anything scattered about the wreck in the nature of any type of folders or notebooks. On the back seat of the car, Trooper [] observed two stacks of paper relating to the union contract negotiations and other documents of a personal nature, including a red spiral notebook approximately 11 inches by 9 inches in size. Persons at the scene stated that only the contents of Silkwood's purse were scattered on the ground.

MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD

Silkwood's car was towed by wrecker dispatched by the Ford agency in Crescent, Oklahoma following a request by the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. The wrecked vehicle was removed at approximately 9:30 p.m., and was towed to the garage where it was placed still attached to the wrecker. The car was examined the following day by representatives from the Kerr-McGee plant who were accompanied by Trooper [] and a Crescent police officer. The car was examined and one of the examiners obtained a sample of a red looking substance from a plastic container in the wrecked vehicle. The car was checked with a geiger counter, and nothing other than the red liquid sample was taken. The personal effects from the interior of the car were placed in an oil case box by the garage owner and his assistant on 11/14/74, at approximately 9:30 a.m. At approximately 1:30 p.m., [] Silkwood's boyfriend came to the garage and arranged to pick up the wrecked vehicle. The personal effects were released to [] at this time by the garage owner.

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Silkwood's physician advised that on 10/25/74, he prescribed medication for Silkwood to assist her in sleeping. This prescription was for 30 tablets of 300 milligrams qualude (methaqualone) and was to be taken upon retiring. The Chief Medical Examiner, Board of Medicolegal investigation, Oklahoma City, who performed the autopsy, advised that methaqualone is a hypnotic sleep-inducing drug and the amount of the drug found in the system of Silkwood subsequent to her death would indicate that she was under the influence of the drug at the time of her death and was drowsy or sleepy.

A private accident investigator hired by the OCAW concluded that Silkwood's car had been hit by another car and forced off the road. This conclusion was based partially on the fact that a dent in the left rear bumper and a dent in the under panel of the left rear fender were the results of being hit by another vehicle. Scrapings from this dent were obtained by the Oklahoma Office on 12/3/74, and forwarded to the FBI Lab. The lab analysis of the paint scrapings indicate that no foreign paint or other material was evident.

In regards to possible alleged documents in possession of Silkwood concerning safety violations and falsification of records, the following is noted: A passenger in her car from the plant to the Hub Cafe, on 11/13/74, relates that they each had

MEMORANDUM TO MR. GALLAGHER
RE: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD

their rough notes of the union demands against the company. This individual did not see in the car any brief case or large file of paper or documents. He has no recollection of seeing anywhere in the car any items that may relate to her allegations concerning quality control.

One individual was subsequently located who recalled seeing in Silkwood's possession at the meeting a brown or tan manila folder 12 inches by 9 inches. This person did not know the contents of the folder.

No one at the scene of the accident observed anything scattered about the wreck in the nature of any type of folders or notebooks. Trooper [] observed on the back seat of the car two stacks of papers relating to the union contract negotiations and other documents of a personal nature, including a red spiral notebook 9 inches by 11 inches in size.

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The garage owner and his assistant removed all personal effects from the car on the day following the accident, 11/14/74, and placed them in a oil case box which was thereafter sealed. According to the garage owner's assistant, this box contained two binders approximately 3/8 inches to 1/2 inches thick with black lettering, including the words Kerr-McGee and nuclear. This box was turned over to Silkwood's boyfriend, Stevens. According to Stevens, the folders contained old union papers and information concerning nuclear hazards, industrial ecology, type written union proposals and a small notebook 4 inches by 5 inches.

The results of our investigation were furnished to the U. S. Attorney's Office, Oklahoma City and the Criminal Division of the Department.

On the basis of the facts produced in this investigation it was determined that there was no significant indication of a violation of Federal criminal law in the death of Silkwood. On 9/22/75, our investigation was placed in a closed status.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

JUN 02 1976

TELETYPE

NR001 KX PLAIN

12:15 PM URGENT JUNE 2, 1976 WEH

TO: DIRECTOR (ATTN: INSPECTOR-ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

[REDACTED] INSPECTION DIVISION)

OKLAHOMA CITY

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FROM: KNOXVILLE (159-0)

KAREN G. SILKWOOD. LMRDA.

REMYTELCALL TO INSPECTOR [REDACTED] INSPECTION
DIVISION, JUNE 2, 1976.

[REDACTED] TELEPHONICALLY CONTACTED ME
THIS MORNING AND ADVISED THAT HE IS AN INVESTIGATOR
CURRENTLY WORKING WITH CONGRESSMAN DINGELL WITH RESPECT
TO THE KAREN SILKWOOD INVESTIGATION SEVERAL YEARS AGO
IN OKLAHOMA CITY. HE INDICATED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE AND FBI HQ HAD ORDERED THE OKLAHOMA CITY DIVI-
SION OF THE FBI TO CONDUCT CERTAIN FACETS OF THE INVES-
TIGATION. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT HE HAD DEVELOPED IN-
FORMATION THAT THERE WERE CONTRADICTORY ORDERS CON-
CERNING THE SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION FROM FBI HQ IN
THE LATTER PART OF DECEMBER, 1974, OR JANUARY, 1975.
HE DID NOT CLARIFY WHAT THESE CONTRADICTORY ORDERS WERE.

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EX-101

159-4005-59

JUN 15 1976

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70 JUN 22 1976
EX-101

PAGE TWO KNOXVILLE 159-8

HE INQUIRED OF ME IF I HAD ANY RECOLLECTION OF THE MATTER, AND I TOLD HIM I HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM OKLAHOMA CITY IN DECEMBER, 1974, AND DEPARTED OKLAHOMA CITY ON TRANSFER APPROXIMATELY DECEMBER 15, 1974.

I TOLD HIM THAT I COULD NOT RECALL ANY OF THE DETAILS OF THE CASE, NOR COULD I RECALL ANY CONTRADICTORY ORDERS BEING GIVEN BY FBI HQ AT THE TIME THAT I WAS SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE AT OKLAHOMA CITY. HE ALSO MADE INQUIRY AS TO WHOM THE SUPERVISOR MIGHT HAVE BEEN, AND I TOLD HIM I COULD NOT RECALL. HE INDICATED THAT HE MAY CONTACT THE OKLAHOMA CITY DIVISION WITH RESPECT TO THIS INFORMATION, AND I SUGGESTED THAT HE MAY DESIRE TO MAKE ANY INQUIRY REGARDING THE MATTER THROUGH FBI HQ.

END.

FCD FBIHQ

June 9, 1976

[Redacted]
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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Dear [Redacted]:

This is in reference to your Freedom of Information Act request concerning the death of Karen Silkwood.

Additional material pertaining to the death of Karen Silkwood can now be released to you.

These documents consist of 250 pages and will be forwarded to you upon receipt of \$25 to cover the cost of duplication at ten cents per page. Your check or money order should be made payable to the FBI.

Sincerely yours,

C. M. Kelley

Clarence M. Kelley
Director

REC-59/59-4005-60
7-13
JUN 18 1976

1 - The Deputy Attorney General
Attention: [Redacted]

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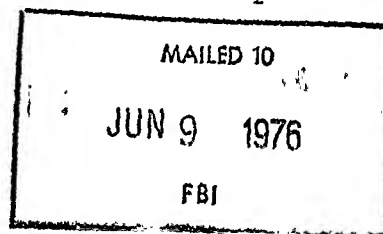
NOTE: Additional documents regarding the death of Karen Silkwood have been released in connection with a pending litigation captioned National Public Radio, et al., v. Edward H. Levi. Requester has already been sent a 58 page release of Silkwood documents. He is now being given the opportunity to acquire these additional documents. Documents being released from Bufile 159-4005. Documents previously released and copies can be found in Bufile 157-2702.

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JUL 22 1976



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CLEAR

(U.S.D.C., W.D. OKLAHOMA) CIVIL ACTION # CIV-76-088-Z

OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

RE BUREAU TELETYPE TO OKLAHOMA CITY, FEBRUARY 14, 1977.

ON FEBRUARY 26, 1977, ATTORNEY FOR

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WITNESS IN INSTANT CASE, TELEPHONICALLY CONTACTED THE

OKLAHOMA CITY DIVISION REGARDING POSSIBLE THREAT TO [REDACTED] BY

ATTORNEY FOR THE KAREN G. SILKWOOD ESTATE. UNITED

STATES ATTORNEY [REDACTED] CONTACTED AND HE INSTRUCTED ~~NOT RECORDED~~

AGENTS SHOULD INTERVIEW

20. MAR 4 1977

ON FEBRUARY 26, 1977, [REDACTED] INTERVIEWED BY SPECIAL

AGENTS [REDACTED] AND [REDACTED] AND [REDACTED] ADVISED [REDACTED] 8 1971

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FEBRUARY 24, 1977, [REDACTED] TOLD HIM SHE HAD A MEET~~THE~~A

107333

Handwritten signature: *Handwritten signature*

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57
MAR 15 1977 BR

PAGE TWO, OC 62-4175 CLEAR

THE ST. HENRY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, WITH ATTORNEY [] ALSO PRESENT WAS HER HUSBAND, [] AND FATHER []. [] REQUESTED MEETING WITH [] TO TRY TO GET OUT OF LAWSUIT. [] TOLD [] THAT [] TOLD HER HE HAD LEARNED HER LIFE HAD BEEN THREATENED BY SOME GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. [] DID NOT REMEMBER WHICH AGENCY OR JUST HOW [] WORDED HER STATEMENT AND DID NOT KNOW IF SHE HAD SAID FBI OR NOT. [] SAID HE DID NOT TAKE THIS POSSIBLE THREAT SERIOUSLY, HOWEVER, SROUJI DID TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.

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[] SAID HE MENTIONED THE POSSIBLE THREAT TO DISTRICT JUDGE LUTHER B. EUBANKS ON FEBRUARY 26, 1977, AND JUDGE EUBANKS DID NOT THINK IT WAS VALID BUT TOLD [] TO CONTACT THE FBI IF HE DESIRED.

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UNITED STATES ATTORNEY [] INFORMED OF RESULTS OF INTERVIEW OF [] AND STATED HE WOULD NOT CONTACT JUDGE EUBANKS SINCE EUBANKS HAD BEEN INFORMED OF POSSIBLE THREAT BY ATTORNEY [] AND [] DID NOT BELIEVE THIS WAS A VALID THREAT.

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[] IS IN OKLAHOMA CITY, THIS DATE, FURNISHING DEPOSITION AND IS RETURNING TO NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, 4:30 P.M.,

PAGE THREE, OC 62-4175 CLEAR.

INSTANT DATE.

OKLAHOMA CITY DIVISION WILL CONDUCT NO FURTHER INVESTIGATION

IN THIS MATTER, UACB.

BT

#

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leg + 1 com.

TELETYPE

ROUTINE

E F T O

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1 - Mr. Gallagher
Attn: [REDACTED]
1 - Mr. Fehl
1 - Mr. DeBruler
Attn: [REDACTED]
2/11/77

FM DIRECTOR (117-2696, 117-2738, 117-2702, 159-4005)

TO OKLAHOMA CITY (62-4175) ROUTINE

1 - Mr. Mintz
1 - Mr. Blunt
1 - Civil Litigation Unit

BT

E F T O

KAREN G. SILKWOOD, ET AL., V.

KERR-MC GEE CORPORATION, ET AL.

(U.S.D.C., W.D. OKLAHOMA)

CIVIL ACTION NO. CIV-76-088-Z

REFERENCE IS MADE TO OKLAHOMA CITY LETTERS TO
FBIHQ DATED 1/6/77, CAPTIONED, "KAREN G. SILKWOOD, BY THE
ADMINISTRATOR OF HER ESTATE, [REDACTED] ET AL., VS.
THE KERR-MC GEE CORPORATION; ET AL., (U.S.D.C. W.D.
OKLAHOMA), CIVIL ACTION NO. 76-0838-E, MISCELLANEOUS -
CIVIL ACTION," AND A 2/4/77 TELETYPE BEARING THE SAME
CAPTION.

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NOT RECORDED
20 FEB 22 1977

IN REFERENCED 1/6/77 LETTERS, YOU ADVISED THAT,
AS OF 1/5/77, SPECIAL AGENT (SA) [REDACTED]

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Assoc. Dir. _____ HAD NOT BEEN ADVISED AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE DEPARTMENT
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.: _____ OF JUSTICE WOULD PROVIDE HIM REPRESENTATION IN CAPTIONED

Adm. Serv. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Fin. & Pers. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Legal Coun. _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Rec. Mgnt _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

CB:clh
clh

CONTINUED - OVER

17 FEB 23 1977

MAIL ROOM

TELETYPE UNIT

PAGE TWO 117-2696, 117-2738, 117-2702, 159-4005

CIVIL ACTION. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT ALL QUESTIONS CONCERNING GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATION HAVE BEEN RESOLVED THROUGH CONSULTATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENTAL ATTORNEY DEFENDING THIS CIVIL ACTION AND SA [REDACTED].

A SECOND 1/6/77 LETTER ADVISED THAT INASMUCH AS SA [REDACTED] ANTICIPATED THAT HE MAY BE CALLED TO FURNISH DEPOSITIONS CONCERNING HIS ACTIONS IN THE INVESTIGATIONS WHICH ARE RELATED TO THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS CIVIL ACTION, HE WAS DESIROUS OF INFORMING HIMSELF AS TO BUREAU PROCEDURES, DEPARTMENTAL REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PROVISIONS REGARDING THE MANNER IN WHICH SPECIAL AGENT DEPOSITIONS IN CIVIL ACTIONS ARE TO BE CONDUCTED. YOU ARE ADVISED THAT SA [REDACTED] SHOULD MAINTAIN CLOSE AND CONTINUOUS CONTACT WITH LEGAL INSTRUCTORS IN YOUR OFFICE CONCERNING THE ABOVE. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE INSTRUCTIONS HAVING APPLICATION TO RESPONDING TO CIVIL ACTIONS ARE CONTAINED IN PART I, SECTION 18, OF THE MANUAL OF RULES AND REGULATIONS. ADDITIONALLY, THE PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT DEMANDS ARE MADE ON YOU, OR SA [REDACTED], CONCERNING TESTIMONY, OR THE PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS IN THIS CASE, MAY BE FOUND BY REFERENCE TO THE PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN TITLE 28, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, SECTIONS 16.21 THROUGH 16.26.

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PAGE THREE 117-2696, 117-2738, 117-2702, 159-4005

THE THIRD REFERENCED LETTER TO FBIHQ DATED 1/6/77, REQUESTED THAT THE CONTENTS OF SEVERAL CASE FILES RELATING TO THE VARIOUS SILKWOOD INVESTIGATIONS, WHICH FILES WERE TRANSFERRED TO FBIHQ IN MAY, 1976, BE RETURNED TO YOUR OFFICE. THE 2/4/77 TELETYPE ADVISED THAT SA COULD BE DEPOSED, IN THIS MATTER, IN APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS, AND REITERATED THE REQUEST THAT THE SILKWOOD FILES BE RETURNED TO YOUR OFFICE.

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YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THE REQUESTED FILE MATERIALS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS WILL BE FURNISHED TO YOU UNDER COVER OF A SEPARATE COMMUNICATION.

BT

NOTE: See Legal Counsel to The Associate Director memorandum dated 2/11/77, captioned as above.

APPROVED:

Director. *[Signature]*
Assoc. Dir. *[Signature]*
Dep. AD Adm. *[Signature]*
Dep. AD Inv. *[Signature]*

Tul

Adm. Serv.
Ext. Affairs.
Fin. & Pers.
Gen. Inv. *[Signature]*
Ident.
Intell.

m/85
Leg. Coun.
Plan. & Insp. *[Signature]*
Rec. Mgt.
S. & T. Serv.
Spec. Inv.
Training.

The Attorney General

July 30, 1976

Director, FBI

**ALLEGATION THAT FBI ORDERED
SILKWOOD INVESTIGATION STOPPED
AFTER FOUR WEEKS**

Reference is made to letter from [redacted] to Mr. Harold N. Bassett, Assistant Director, Inspection Division, of this Bureau, dated June 17, 1976, as captioned, wherein [redacted] requested that a determination be made as to the validity of a radio news broadcast reporting that the FBI had ordered Agents investigating the Karen Silkwood case to stop their investigation after four weeks.

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By my letter dated July 28, 1976, captioned [redacted] Theft of Government Property, Fraud Against the Government, Registration Act, "you were furnished the results of investigation pertaining to Srouji and her testimony on April 26, 1976, before the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment of the Committee on Small Business, House of Representatives. Her testimony related to the Karen Silkwood matter.

Concerning the radio news broadcast reporting that the FBI ordered the Agents conducting the investigation in the Karen Silkwood case to stop their investigation after four weeks, I have had reviewed the Karen Silkwood case, as well as three other cases involving Atomic Energy Act (AEA) matters at the Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, of the Kerr - McGee Corporation. In addition to the Silkwood case, two of the three investigations initiated by the FBI were directly related to the Silkwood matter. None of these three investigations were stopped after four weeks and no instructions were issued by any Bureau officials to this effect. These two investigations are captioned as follows:

"Unknown Subject; Unauthorized Possession of Plutonium Resulting in the Contamination of Karen Silkwood (deceased), Sherri Ellis and Drew Stephens, Kerr - McGee Corporation (KMC), Nuclear Products Division, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma; AEA"

159-4005
NOT RECORDED

AUG 9 1976

1- Messrs. Adams, Gallagher, Leavitt, Mintz, Moore

1- (159-4005) 117-2696; 117-2701; 117-2702

JAC:jmh

5 AUG 19 1976

SEE NOTE PAGE 4.

DUPLICATE YELLOW

ORIGINAL FILED IN 99-5507-90

The Attorney General

"Kerr - McGee Corporation
Cimarron Facility
Crescent, Oklahoma
AEA - OOJ"

The fourth investigation is captioned "Unknown Subject; Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr - McGee Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, December 16, 1974; AEA." This case, while not directly related to the Silkwood matter, was initiated by the Oklahoma City Office on December 17, 1974, upon receipt of information from the Kerr - McGee Corporation that it was discovered on December 16, 1974, enriched uranium 235 fuel pellets had been scattered around the plant grounds at the Cimarron Facility. The Kerr - McGee Corporation reported that a search had recovered some 15 pellets and the scattering of these pellets likely occurred during the prior seven to nine days.

On December 24, 1974, a letterhead memorandum prepared by the Oklahoma City Office dated December 19, 1974, was disseminated to the Criminal Division of the Department with the request that advice be furnished as to what further investigation, if any, was desired in this matter. Subsequent to this dissemination, [redacted] Internal Security Section of the Criminal Division, advised that if the pellets were scattered deliberately by Kerr - McGee employees, such act could constitute unauthorized possession of special nuclear material and would be a criminal violation of the AEA. [redacted] advised that prior to requesting additional FBI investigation it was desired to have available for review by the Department the results of any Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) investigation. Accordingly, our Chicago Office was instructed to contact the NRC, Region 3 Office, and obtain the results of their investigation for forwarding to FBI Headquarters for Departmental review. The results of the NRC investigation were made available to the Bureau and were hand delivered to [redacted] on January 27, 1975.

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Subsequently, by letter from [redacted] Acting Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, dated February 14, 1975, captioned "Scattering of Uranium Fuel Pellets, Kerr - McGee Corporation, Cimarron Facility, Crescent, Oklahoma, December 16, 1974; AEA," this Bureau was requested to continue investigation with the view of identifying the individual or individuals responsible for this incident.

The Attorney General

As a result of this instruction, investigation was continued and reports of Special Agent [redacted], dated March 19, 1975; May 12, 1975; and June 17, 1975, were disseminated to the U. S. Attorney in Oklahoma City, as well as to the Criminal Division of the Department and the NRC.

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Based on the review of FBI files, it would appear that the matter pertaining to the scattering of uranium fuel pellets may have given rise to the reported radio news broadcast referred to in [redacted] letter.

For your additional information, on June 2, 1976, [redacted] staff member of the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment (Dingell Committee), telephonically contacted Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Harold C. Swanson of our Knoxville Office and advised he is working with Congressman Dingell with respect to the Karen Silkwood investigation of several years ago in Oklahoma City. [redacted] indicated to Mr. Swanson that the Department of Justice and FBI Headquarters had ordered the Oklahoma City Division of the FBI to conduct certain facets of the investigation and he had developed information that there were contradictory orders concerning the scope of the investigation from FBI Headquarters in the latter part of December, 1974, or in January, 1975. [redacted] did not clarify for Mr. Swanson what these contradictory orders were, but did inquire if Mr. Swanson had any recollection of the matter. Mr. Swanson advised [redacted] that he had been transferred from the position of SAC of the Oklahoma City Office in December, 1974, and departed that same month to his current assignment as SAC in Knoxville. Mr. Swanson informed [redacted] that he could not recall any of the details of the Silkwood case nor could he recall any contradictory orders being given by FBI Headquarters at the time he was SAC at Oklahoma City. [redacted] indicated to Mr. Swanson that he might contact the Oklahoma City Division concerning this matter. Mr. Swanson suggested to [redacted] that he may desire to make any inquiry regarding the matter to FBI Headquarters..

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If any further inquiry is desired concerning this matter, please so advise.

1 - The Deputy Attorney General

1 - Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division

1 - [redacted]
Office of Professional Responsibility

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NOTE: Upon receipt of [] letter of 6/17/76, the General Investigative and Intelligence Divisions were requested to review the investigations conducted by the Oklahoma City Office at the Cimarron Facility of the Kerr - McGee Corporation, Crescent, Oklahoma. Memoranda S. S. Mignosa to Mr. Leavitt dated 6/25/76, and L. E. Rhyne to Mr. Gallagher dated 6/22/76, set forth results of review of the Silkwood case and three AEA matters conducted by the Oklahoma City Office.

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Information concerning conversation of Peter Stockton with SAC Swanson, Knoxville, set forth in Knoxville teletype to Bureau, 6/2/76.

The response to [] letter was held in abeyance until the letter to the Attorney General dated 7/28/76, setting forth the results of the [] inquiry had been forwarded to the Department.

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(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

The Silkwood Case

By Mark N. Whitney

Once in a while a news story comes along that refuses to die. When that happens it is most often because the facts surrounding the story are left shrouded with unanswered questions.

Those unanswered questions remain alive because either investigative agencies or the media default on their responsibilities and fail to pursue the truth in the face of confusion or persuasion. Once in a while such a story refuses to die simply because it is so controversial. That controversy meshed with unanswered questions creates an atmosphere of ongoing curiosity and doubt.

This is the story of such an incident and the part Oklahoma media played in answering the questions that surround it.

Karen Silkwood was an employee of Kerr-McGee Corporation. She died Nov. 13, 1974, in an automobile accident near Kerr-McGee's plutonium enrichment plant in Crescent, Oklahoma.

In the months since, questions about her death and the Kerr-McGee nuclear facility have remained unanswered. Furthermore, questions have arisen concerning the role of the Oklahoma media in dealing with this incident.

Silkwood was a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Worker's International Union and was trying to document certain safety allegations against Kerr-McGee.

According to union officials, on the evening of her death she was on her way to

Oklahoma City to meet with a union representative and David Burnham, a reporter for the New York Times. At least one witness has sworn Silkwood carried with her evidence concerning alleged safety problems at the plant.

Approximately one mile from Crescent her car left the road and apparently struck the concrete wing wall of a culvert.

Both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Oklahoma Highway patrol investigated the accident and failed to find evidence of foul play. The official report concluded that she fell asleep at the wheel.

State Medical Examiner Jay Chapman said her body contained "more than a therapeutic dose..." of methaqualone, a hypnotic drug she was using as a tranquilizer.

A private investigator, A.O. Pipkin, hired by the OCAW union, found evidence that Silkwood's car could have been forced off of the road.

Silkwood's death and the subsequent investigations and allegations were covered by several out-of-state newspapers, television networks and magazine. Both the CBS and ABC television networks carried the incident on the evening news. The New York Times covered the incident, and continued to run occasional stories on Kerr-McGee with regard to nuclear energy. Rolling Stone and Ms. magazines ran lengthy feature articles concerning Silkwood and Kerr-McGee.

ABC devoted a segment of one "Reasoner Report" to questions

Assoc. Dir. _____
 Dep.-A.D.-Adm. _____
 Dep.-A.D.-Inv. _____
 Asst. Dir.: _____
 Admin. _____
 Comp. Syst. _____
 Ext. Affairs _____
 Gen. Inv. _____
 Ident. _____
 Insp. _____
 Intel. _____
 Labor _____
 Spec. Inv. _____
 Training _____
 Telephone Rm. _____
 Director Sec'y. _____

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

1 Oklahoma Observer
 Oklahoma City, Okla.

Date: March 25, 1976
 Edition: Weekly
 Author: Mark N. Whitney
 Editor:
 Title: Kerr Mc Gee Corp.,
 Crescent, Oklahoma;
 Karen G. Silkwood

Character:

or

Classification: 159-45

Submitting Office: Okla. City

☐ Being Investigated

NOT RECORDED

48 JUN 7 1976

56 JUN 09 1976

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surrounding her wreck and Kerr-McGee's operations.

It noted that officials of Kerr-McGee had refused to talk with them, as they had also refused to speak with state media.

It also brought out that trooper Rick Fagan made the initial report for the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. On the force for only a few months, it was one of his first fatality accidents.

ABC news correspondent David Schoumacker interviewed one of the Patrol's top accident investigators, Lt. Larry Owen.

Schoumacker: Why did his (Pipkin's) investigators find no trace of concrete in the dent?

Lt. Owen: I don't know. I really...it's a very good question. I had not had the opportunity to take samples. We didn't take samples that night.

Schoumacker: Why didn't you do it at some point since then?

Lt. Owen: We haven't had access to the vehicle mainly.

Schoumacker: But you certainly could ask for it.

Lt. Owen: We checked to see if there was a possibility of finding the vehicle and were unsuccessful in locating it.

Schoumacker: It's a little surprising to me that the Oklahoma Highway Patrol is so powerless to go out and get it if it wants it.

Lt. Owen: Well, it depends on how bad you want it.

Schoumacker: If you want the car bad enough to make two phone calls, which is all we did, you can find it?

ABC affiliates in Oklahoma City and Tulsa do not normally air the "Reasoner Report," and therefore did not air this particular segment. In the smaller communities of Ada and Lawton the show was aired. However, station representatives don't recall receiving any particular feed-back from the community as a result.

Frosty Troy, editor of the Oklahoma Observer, a newspaper of commentary, was asked if he thought the Oklahoma news media gave adequate coverage to the story.

Troy replied, "Good Lord, no."

Elaborating, Troy said that coverage in the Daily Oklahoman was good as far as it went.

Of the two major newspapers in the Oklahoma City area, Troy said, "Both papers were strictly (pro) Kerr-McGee editorially."

"KTOK (radio) was going," said Troy. But he was unimpressed with their coverage after Joe Pennington, their assistant news director, left.

Pennington, who had done most of KTOK's investigative reporting of the incident, when asked, acknowledged that he left the station partially because of disagreements over the coverage of the

Silkwood story.

Now working in Columbus, Ohio, Pennington stated, "Generally, I think the coverage was bad...or even worse. Not to pat either myself or KTOK on the back, I do feel our reporting of the matter was the best in the state."

"I feel it was handled well by KTOK...with good, solid research and documentation every step of the way. I don't know why other media in the city did not choose to apply the same resources that KTOK did."

"I know now that management influence was apparently exerted in some quarters."

Pennington hypothesized that perhaps because of the complex technical aspects of the nuclear process some journalists found it easy to shy away from the article. He suggested that perhaps some editors merely did not find the story of sufficient community interest.

He added that it was his personal belief that fear, lack of experience, personnel problems and intimidation all helped cause poor coverage of the story by most of the Oklahoma City media.

"I worked very closely with several national publications in the preparation of material for articles on the story. Without exception, every reporter with whom I consulted expressed consternation at the lack of proper coverage in Oklahoma City."

"Whatever the case," he concluded, "it is clear to me the story was not adequately revealed by any Oklahoma City media source other than KTOK."

Alan Bromley, the reporter who dealt most frequently with this incident for the Daily Oklahoman, said that it was his opinion that the Oklahoma Publishing Company provided the only really good coverage of the story in Oklahoma City.

"The paper gave me a lot of time," said Bromley. "I don't know if more coverage would answer more questions."

He said that it was just a matter of putting in time, and explained that very early in the coverage he was shut off by the union as well as Kerr-McGee.

OPUBCO Defended

Jim Standard, managing editor of the Daily Oklahoman, was asked if he thought coverage of the Silkwood incident was adequate in his newspaper. His answer was that he thought it was covered as adequately as any story ever is.

"When we first broke the story, the articles did not put Kerr-McGee in a very good light," said Standard. "If a party is less than candid it will reflect in an unfavorable light. And there was little

response from them (Kerr-McGee) or an official source. Eventually, the weight of events turned to knocking down any murder allegation."

"We tried to tell the story...tried to cover Kerr-McGee fairly. There was no internal decision to slant the news."

"If they called this paper, information of it never reached this level, I can't imagine Kerr-McGee trying to influence us."

"However, I don't see how anyone could not have unanswered questions."

In the six months following Karen Silkwood's death the Daily Oklahoman and the Oklahoma City Times, its evening paper, published approximately 68 articles related to her or Kerr-McGee. Of those, 41 tended to reflect favorably on the corporation, while 27 did not.

John Clabes, managing editor of the Oklahoma Journal, the city's other major newspaper, was asked if he thought his paper gave enough information to its readers to allow them to have intelligent attitudes toward nuclear energy.

He replied, "We weren't trying to give readers an education. We tried to say 'without atoms you'll be cold.'"

The possibility of management influence and intimidation which Pennington spoke of, is perhaps the most serious aspect of the media's coverage on this story.

It is, of course, the right of a managing editor or news director to question or direct a reporter's coverage of a story. But why he does so can have ethical implications.

Bromley did not feel OPUBCO had buckled to any sort of pressure, pointing out that the story had been played on the front page for two and a half months.

John Clabes said he thought it was the Journal's responsibility to show the other side of the story, that OPUBCO was going all out to "get" Kerr-McGee and the Journal was showing people not only that Kerr-McGee was not at fault, but that he felt they had been portrayed falsely by OPUBCO.

He pointed to the story of the Atomic Energy Commission's final findings on the case, clearing Kerr-McGee. The Journal, he said, ran the story on the front page along with a related editorial. The Oklahoman ran it on an inside page. This, according to Clabes, pointed out that OPUBCO was ashamed of their earlier coverage of the story.

As to the possibility that pressure had been applied by Kerr-McGee, Clabes said, "No. Kerr-McGee just doesn't run that kind of a business."

Oklahoma City is served by three major television stations, all affiliated with different national television networks. Of the three separate news directors, only one was reasonably satisfied with the way his station covered the story.

As news director of KTVY (then WKY), the NBC affiliate, Ernie Schultz stated that he felt that his station gave the story the coverage it deserved.

KTVY was then the number one rated news station in its market. Schultz and his crew tended to give this story a very conservative play.

Third in the market is KOCO-TV, the ABC affiliate. ABC's "Reasoner Report" used a great deal of KOCO footage for their segment on Karen Silkwood.

Ron Hudson at KOCO explained that coverage of the story at his station continued for six months into April.

"I was not satisfied," said Hudson, "because the story never reached a conclusion. A conclusion hasn't yet been reached."

As a member of the KOCO news staff, Linda Cavanaugh spent a considerable amount of time on the Silkwood case.

Like Hudson, she was not satisfied with the coverage because it had no concrete conclusion. Although she stated that she had difficulty getting anyone to talk about the Silkwood story, her primary complaints were about television staff organization.

Reasoner Report

She said, "The set-up in Oklahoma City television news is not conducive to investigative reporting. We have a staff of four or five people who are responsible for three or more stories a day. It's not like David Shoumaker who can come down here and work on a story for a week."

"It is a shame that with a big story like this, no reporters were allowed to break free of the regular routine."

Both she and Hudson stated that they experienced no internal or external pressure concerning the Silkwood story.

Roy Charles is the news director at KWTU, Oklahoma City's CBS affiliate.

Said Charles: "If you're saying the local media dropped the ball, I couldn't agree with you more. We were sitting on the story of the year and didn't have sense enough to know it."

"We got a particularly good break early in the story, and handled the first phases very well. But it was very disappointing."

"We got a good start, then, I suppose we were derelict in not following it up. But it was from sloppiness on our part, and not from any pressure."

"I wouldn't be surprised if some contacts were made between public relations people. There's nothing unusual about that. But I personally didn't experience any pressure."

Did Kerr-McGee successfully use its influence to control media coverage of the story?

According to Pennington, officials of Kerr-McGee notified KTOK vice-president and general manager Kenneth Gaines once, and perhaps twice, to express

displeasure with the presentation. Gaines allegedly responded with an offer of free broadcast time for a representative of Kerr-McGee with KTOK reporters questioning him. The offer was not accepted.

Gaines declined to comment on these allegations.

Frosty Troy related that the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce told officials at OPUBCO that Kerr-McGee was considering moving its corporate headquarters from Oklahoma City. He cited State Rep. Thomas Bamberger as his source.

What Pressures?

When asked about this, Bamberger refused to either confirm or deny it.

Paul Strausbaugh, a member of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, was asked if there had been any confrontations between members of the Chamber and local newsmen regarding the Silkwood story.

He replied, "I'm not even going to touch that. No thank you."

Phil Van Stavern of KTOK stated that Strausbaugh and Chamber president Ed Cook used the press conference of an Oklahoma U.S. Senator to criticize reporters for their critical coverage of Kerr-McGee.

"Strausbaugh," he said, "told me he had always wanted to meet someone trying to ruin his country."

Pennington, on one hand, pointed out that it is unlikely that Kerr-McGee would really consider moving when they have so much invested in their present location.

Troy, on the other hand, stated, "It would be rather odd if they had power and influence and didn't try to use it."

What if the papers succumbed to the pressure?

Jim Standard admitted that initially at least the articles in his paper reflected unfavorably on Kerr-McGee. But after January 1, 1975, there was a turn-around, with 41 articles tending to favor Kerr-McGee in the next four months, and only eight tending to reflect unfavorably.

Standard attributes that to the story

having run its natural course.

Although the Journal initially covered the basics of the Silkwood incident, they appeared to be editorially pro-Kerr-McGee, publishing 26 stories tending to be favorable as opposed to nine tending to be unfavorable.

Included in their coverage was a front-page editorial and an article announcing that Dean McGee, chairman of the board of Kerr-McGee, was named as a member of an advisory board dealing with long-range energy problems for the federal government.

Did the abrupt turn-about by the Oklahoman and the lower news play by the Journal indicate that they were pressured into not covering the Silkwood story?

Alan Bromley stated that while he "assumed pressure was applied from Kerr-McGee, I never felt it personally."

Over one year after the incident, the Silkwood-McGee story has not died.

There have been lawsuits filed by a national women's organization and a broadcasters organization that demand information related to the incident.

Officially, Kerr-McGee's facility in Crescent is closed indefinitely because of economic problems.

As for the role the Oklahoma media played in dealing with the incident, it is shrouded like the incident itself in a veil of questions, allegations and little concrete proof.

From the transcript of the "Reasoner Report" it is evident that there are several points related to the incident that were not made available to the Oklahoma public.

One of the two major Oklahoma City newspapers (The Journal) admittedly took a specific side of the issue.

In addition, from the time the incident occurred, officials of Kerr-McGee have refused to speak with the local or national media.

Many local newsmen still find themselves with a feeling of dissatisfaction because the story never reached a conclusion.

If the media was unaffected by external or internal pressure, and yet still have unanswered questions, what about the public? Have they been informed?

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO :

[Redacted]

b6
b7C

DATE: 9/7/77

FROM :

[Redacted]

SUBJECT: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) REQUEST
FROM THE NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, CONCERNING
KAREN GAY SILKWOOD

Assoc. Dir. _____
Dep. AD Adm. _____
Dep. AD Inv. _____
Asst. Dir.: _____
Adm. Serv. _____
Ext. Affairs _____
Fin. & Pers. _____
Gen. Inv. _____
Ident. _____
Inspection _____
Intell. _____
Laboratory _____
Legal Coun. _____
Plan. & Eval. _____
Rec. Mgnt. _____
Spec. Inv. _____
Training _____
Telephone Rm. _____
Director Sec'y _____

PURPOSE:

To furnish to Legal Counsel requested documents processed under FOIA pertaining to plutonium contamination investigation of Karen Gay Silkwood, deceased (Bufile 117-2702).

DETAILS:

Karen Silkwood, deceased, worked for Kerr McGee Corporation, Nuclear Products Division, Crescent, Oklahoma. She was involved in plutonium contamination incidents and also her apartment was found to be contaminated. She was active in union activities at the plant. She died the evening of 11/13/74 in a one car accident. The circumstances surrounding the contamination incidents involving Silkwood, her apartment, etc., have been the subject of much controversy and sensational publicity in the various media.

Information concerning her death, Bufile 159-4005, has been released under FOIA and information concerning our investigation into her contamination, Bufile 117-2702, has been withheld (this has been supported by District Court decision).

Enclosure

2 - Mr. Mintz

Attn: [Redacted]

Attn: [Redacted]

1 - Mr. Moore

Attn: [Redacted]

DRW:dkg (6)

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159-4005-61

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FBI/DOJ

Mr. Bresson to Mr. Decker Memo
Re: FOIA Request from the National Public
Radio, Concerning Karen Gay Silkwood

On 8/24/77, SA [] Legal Counsel, advised that the Department's Civil Division desired to release information contained in the contamination investigation, and requested FOIA Disclosure Section to process Bufile 117-2702. As the investigation dealt with technical matters in the atomic energy field, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was consulted. NRC from 8/26/77 to 9/6/77 reviewed all material in file 117-2702 through serial 57 and advised material was not classified and suggested no other FOIA exemptions.

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In view of the public and congressional interest and wide news media coverage of this landmark case, maximum disclosure has been made. Many third party names have been released because of public exposure of these individuals or that disclosure would not be an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. A very minimum amount of information has been withheld under FOIA exemption (b) (7) (C) (privacy). Attached for Legal Counsel are 406 pages. There is a duplication charge of 10 cents per page for a total of \$40.60 if material is released by Department's Civil Division.

Disclosure Section was informed that [] the deceased's father, is suing Kerr McGee Corporation and two FBI Agents involved in investigation. This release should be coordinated with SA [] Legal Counsel to determine if it will have any adverse effect on this current litigation.

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[] has obtained all available documents relating to the death investigation of his daughter. Contamination investigation documents to be released by the Department will be made available to Mr. Silkwood due to his FOIA request for all information in this matter.

ACTION:

None. For information.

APW
B